

## on temporizing

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/32291371) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/32291371>.

Rating:	<a href="#">Teen And Up Audiences</a>
Archive Warnings:	<a href="#">Graphic Depictions Of Violence</a> , <a href="#">Major Character Death</a>
Category:	<a href="#">Gen</a>
Fandoms:	<a href="#">Minecraft (Video Game)</a> , <a href="#">Dream SMP</a>
Relationships:	<a href="#">TommyInnit &amp; Dream</a> , <a href="#">No Romantic Relationship(s)</a>
Characters:	<a href="#">TommyInnit</a> , <a href="#">Clay   Dream (Video Blogging RPF)</a> , <a href="#">Dream SMP Ensemble</a> , <a href="#">pretty much everyone - Character</a>
Additional Tags:	<a href="#">Time Loop</a> , <a href="#">Time Travel</a> , <a href="#">Alternate Universe - Canon Divergence</a> , <a href="#">Alternate Universe - Time Travel</a> , <a href="#">Time Travel Fix-It</a> , <a href="#">Sort Of</a> , <a href="#">Humor</a> , <a href="#">Crack</a> , <a href="#">Crack Treated Seriously</a> , <a href="#">Angst</a> , <a href="#">Ghost TommyInnit (Video Blogging RPF)</a> , <a href="#">Ghost Clay   Dream (Video Blogging RPF)</a> , <a href="#">but make it cursed</a> , <a href="#">Fluff</a> , <a href="#">Clay   Dream &amp; TommyInnit Friendship (Video Blogging RPF)</a> , <a href="#">Hurt/Comfort</a> , <a href="#">Dream Gets A Redemption Arc</a> , <a href="#">hey who put plot in my crack fic</a> , <a href="#">Clay   Dream-centric (Video Blogging RPF)</a> , <a href="#">TommyInnit-centric (Video Blogging RPF)</a> , <a href="#">Time Travelling Karl Jacobs</a> , <a href="#">no beta we die like the entire dream smp in the finale</a>
Language:	English
Series:	Part 8 of <a href="#">Belle's Dream SMP Fics</a> , Part 1 of <a href="#">delaying the inevitable</a>
Collections:	<a href="#">Dream SMP fics that butter my bread</a> , <a href="#">Late Night Reads For Restless Spirits</a> , <a href="#">Cross' Collection of DSMP/SBI fics (unfinished)</a> , <a href="#">cauldronrings favs (｡◕｡)✧</a> , <a href="#">DSMP Fics I adore - Mainly about Tommy because that boy is my - traumatized - comfort character 🥰</a> , <a href="#">fics i can and will stay up to 3am to re-read</a> , <a href="#">OMG (｡°)☞ Pogchamp DSMP Fanfic!!</a> , <a href="#">Pog DISC DUO Collection 🥰 ☹️ !!! ㄱ(｡㉨｡)ㄴ</a> , <a href="#">Mostly TommyInnit Fics</a> , <a href="#">Saved the Best for Last</a> , <a href="#">DSMP fics you NEED to read. like- seriously. ☆\ (UuU\)</a> , <a href="#">Dream SMP fics that make my heart stop</a> , <a href="#">Aivy's absolute favorites ❤️</a> , <a href="#">fluffy discduo</a> , <a href="#">DreamSMP</a> , <a href="#">In Which TommyInnit Meets Time\Dimension Travel</a> , <a href="#">WOO Insomnia Time</a> , <a href="#">found family (again) but its just discduo</a> , <a href="#">Characters Trolling People With Misunderstandings</a> , <a href="#">DsmP crack timeloop fics</a> , <a href="#">Things to fuel my escapism.</a> , <a href="#">(DsmP) fics i would die for</a> , <a href="#">Best dsmP fanfics that hooked my heart ( mostly sbi ) (｡◕｡)ㄴ</a> , <a href="#">*nods head in approval *</a> , <a href="#">Fics I read way so much it definitely isn't healthy but they're really good</a> , <a href="#">Fics to fuel my special interests</a> , <a href="#">Royal's collection of insanity and happiness</a> , <a href="#">I should probably stop rereading these... but I won't!</a> , <a href="#">A_D_As Library</a> , <a href="#">Fandoms (General)</a> , <a href="#">Themes (Tags) (general)</a> , <a href="#">appl's dsmP library</a> , <a href="#">Juricii's Collection of Various Stories</a>
Stats:	Published: 2021-07-01 Updated: 2024-07-05 Words: 247,848 Chapters: 47/50

# on temporizing

by [LuckyMagicBelle](#)

## Summary

Tommy and Dream are trapped in a time loop.  
What do they do? Mess with everyone else, of course.

*русский translation by kuwwizz [here!](#)*

## Notes

this is the product of me being sleep deprived and in the mood for some humor, so nothing  
super high quality  
enjoy

**Warnings: Foul Language, Violence**

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

- Inspired by [Dream SMP Fic Prompts](#) by [LuckyMagicBelle](#)

# Chapter 1

1.

"I am going to fucking murder you, Tommy!"

The shout echoed through L'Manberg. Several people whipped around in time to see TommyInnit sprint past them, cackling wildly. Dream followed a moment later, wielding a netherite axe.

"Can't kill me if you can't catch me, bitch!" the teen shrieked gleefully, then screamed and jumped off the path as Dream hurled the axe, sending it spinning past Tommy's head. "What the fuck!"

"Tommy!" Dream howled, stopping to retrieve his axe before leaping off the path as well. "Get back here!"

"Sam!" Tommy screamed, doubling back and ducking under Dream's wild swing. He leaped up the side of the hill back onto the path, dashing towards the community house. "Sam, help!"

The creeper hybrid looked startled, frozen midstep. His gaze darkened when he saw Tommy sprinting towards him, Dream hot on his heels. Tommy skidded to a stop behind him, panting with exertion. "Sam," he choked out. "Sam, you gotta help, he's gonna kill me--"

Sam slammed his trident into the floor, standing tall as Dream approached. "Dream, stop."

The man growled. "Step aside, Sam."

Sam met his gaze, glaring resolutely. "No. I've already let you get away with too m-- what happened to your mask?"

Tommy burst into hysterical laughter. Dream's grip on his axe tightened.

"Tommy," he snarled threateningly. The curly mustache drawn across his mask ruined the effect. Tommy continued to devolve into hysterics, practically asphyxiating on dry land.

"Er. . ." Sam glanced between the two of them, bewildered. "I- what?"

2.

"Tommy, please!" Tubbo screamed, tears pouring down his face. He strained forward, Eret's grip on his arms holding him back. "You're better than this!"

Tommy laughed madly, insanity shining in his eyes. He raised the remote. "It was never meant to be!"

*BOOM!*

Eret yanked Tubbo down, covering his body. Explosions and screams resounded through L'Manberg.

Gradually, they faded away. Silence fell, the terrible quiet that followed an explosion. Slowly, Eret shifted away from Tubbo, allowing him to sit up and assess the damage.

Smoke filled the air, and Tubbo coughed, waving aside the haze to reveal--

L'Manberg. Perfectly intact, save for the fact that every available surface was covered in glitter.

Tubbo looked down at himself. The gritty texture he'd taken for dirt was, in fact, glitter.

"FUCK IT'S IN MY EYES!" Tommy shrieked. Tubbo blinked, bewildered, at the sight of his friend (?), rolling from side to side on the roof. He'd escaped the worst of the blast, but his hair and shoulders were still dusted with glitter. "OH GOD IT STINGS!"

Dream landed next to him, raising a neat puff of glitter around his feet. Somehow, he was perfectly pristine, not a single speck on him.

"Why would you set it off while you were in the blast radius?!"

"FOR DRAMATIC EFFECT! FUCK YOU!"

Dream snorted, only to yelp as Tommy grabbed him by the ankle and yanked him off his feet. He landed on his back on the glitter-covered roof, sending up another puff of glitter that he accidentally inhaled, if his coughing was anything to go by.

"I-" he wheezed out when his vocal chords start functioning again, "-am going- to- *hck*-murder you."

Tommy only grinned before scooping up a handful of glitter and dropping it onto Dream's face.

"What the fuck," Tubbo said, then spit out the glitter that had fallen into his mouth.

**3.**

Technoblade opened the door, saw Dream and Tommy, and promptly shut it again.

"Rude," Dream huffed, pounding insistently on the door again. "C'mon, Technoblade, we just want to talk!"

"No," Technoblade deadpanned. "Leave me alone, I'm retired."

"Techno, open the fucking door!" Tommy shouted. There was a loud thud as he kicked the wood.

"I'm calling in the favor," Dream added.

Technoblade stared incredulously at the door. "Wha-- the favor is to open the door?"

"No! I mean I want to call in the favor, but I gotta talk to you about it."

The piglin hybrid huffed and reluctantly unbolted the door. "What do you want."

Dream shifted awkwardly. "Uh. . . can we come i--"

"No."

"Okay. I want you to go on a vacation with us."

"A vacation," Technoblade said flatly.

"Yep. To L'Manberg."

Technoblade stared at Dream, then at Tommy, who seemed to find nothing wrong with this situation. "In case you forgot, Tommy's exiled, and they're kinda tryin' ta kill me."

Dream shrugged. "Details."

"C'mon, we're gonna go visit Philza Minecraft," Tommy wheedled. "Don't you wanna see Phil?"

"You're both insane."

"So are you," Dream chirped. Technoblade conceded that it was a fair point. "The question is, are you insane enough to come with us?"

"I don't have much of a choice, do I?" Technoblade turned back inside. "Let me grab some gear, then we'll go."

**4.**

"Ten paces, fire!"

A pause.

Dream and Tommy turned to face each other, making no move to attack.

"Dream, what are you doing?" Sapnap shouted. He was ignored.

"I'm speedrunning this shit," Tommy said aloud. He lowered his crossbow. "I'll give you Cat and Mellohi for independence."

"No," Dream replied instantly.

Tommy made an indignant noise. "The fuck?! I'm tryin' ta speedrun a revolution here, Dream, stop messing with me!"

Dream sighed, dropping his crossbow. "Counterdeal," he intoned, looking up at the sky. "Come with me and L'Manberg can have independence."

The L'Manberg side instantly erupted into protests. They were ignored.

Tommy stared at him for a long moment, then smirked. He strode forward, grasping Dream's hand. "You got yourself a deal, big man."

Dream grinned. "Excellent."

"TOMMY, WHAT THE FUCK?!" Fundy burst out.

"Tommy. . ." Tubbo stepped forward, concern shining in his eyes.

Tommy waved a hand as he was pulled away by Dream. "Don't worry, I'll be fine!"

"You can have him back later," Dream called. "I just need him for something."

"What exactly do you need him for?" Wilbur demanded.

Dream pressed a finger to his lips. "Secret."

---

"Dream."

"Hm?"

"Who the fuck is that?"

Dream grinned. "That's XD, guardian of the End."

Tommy stared blankly at the Dream lookalike. "Doesn't look much like a guardian, does he?"

"That's his human form," Dream replied cheerily. "Don't ask why he--"

"Why the fuck does he look like you?"

"--looks like me," Dream finished, sighing with exasperation. He turned to XD. "Hey, can we have a dragon egg?"

"No."

---

Tommy slammed the door of the camarvan open. "I'M BACK!"

Fundy shrieked, jumping a foot in the air. Wilbur whipped around from where he had been staring at a bunch of important-looking papers.

Tubbo rushed forward and engulfed him in a hug. "You're alive!"

Wilbur looked relieved, but his eyes were narrowed with suspicion. "What did you do?"

Tommy pulled away from Tubbo, looked Wilbur in the eye, and said calmly, "Fight god."

A long pause. "What?" Fundy asked.

Tommy grinned. "Fight god," he repeated, "and commit sin. Lots of sin."

## 5.

Tommy grinned victoriously, raising the axe and bringing it down upon Dream--

--only to swear and redirect it at the last moment. The momentum of the swing ripped the axe out of his hands, sending it skittering across the blackstone floor.

"Oh, oh *fuck*," he gasped. "Dream, big man, you okay?"

Dream sighed, lowering the arm he'd raised as a paltry defense. "So we're back here now?"

"Here?" Tommy followed his gaze to the crowd gathered behind him, decked out in full netherite and all glaring hatefully at Dream. "Oh."

"Oh," Dream echoed mockingly. "What do we do?"

There was a long moment of silence.

Then Tommy kicked Dream in the face. The man careened back, mask cracking. "What the fuck?" He demanded.

"I'll get you out later," Tommy replied cheerily. "But I got the chance to beat you up, you bastard, and I'm not wasting it."

Dream sighed. "This is because of Tubbo last loop, isn't it."

Tommy smirked.

## Chapter 2

### Chapter Notes

welp you guys really liked this so. guess this is a multichapter fic now. Be warned: I'm not the best at writing humor so forgive me if the quality declines over time--  
The formatting of this fic is going to be heavily based on skyestar7703's *Living in the Circular*. Go check out that fic if you like this one, because it is so good I simply cannot express--

#### **Spotlighted comment of the previous chapter: JJ\_Rays**

"They say violence is the answer, but I say that glitter is always an option."  
-Sun Tzu, *Art of War*

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

#### **6. (credit to Trytokillmeorsomething123)**

"What," said Sapnap the moment he stepped onto Tommy's exile beach.

"Welcome to Stonesteadshire," Dream announced cheerily, gesturing to the Very Tall cobblestone tower that loomed over them. "We would have called it Cobblestonesteadshire, but that took too long to say."

"What." Sapnap repeated flatly. Dream ignored his confusion, brushing past him and heading towards the tower. Ghostbur floated after him, humming cheerily.

Sapnap exchanged looks with Bad, then followed.

Dream stopped at the base of the tower. Cupping his hands over his mouth, he rocked back on his heels and took a deep breath. "TOMMY!" he shouted. "TOMMY, LET DOWN YOUR LADDER!"

There was a moment of silence. Then: "FUCK YOU!"

Dream hopped nimbly aside as a large chunk of stone crashed down where he had been standing seconds before. "THAT WASN'T VERY NICE, TOMMY!" he called.

"FUCK YOU!" Tommy bellowed again. A rope ladder was tossed out of the window near the top of the tower. Dream tried to back up as the ladder unfurled, but he was too slow. The end whipped him across the face.

"GAH!" he cried. "WHY?!"



“YOU TOLD ME TO LET DOWN MY LADDER, BITCH!”

“I TOLD YOU TO LET IT DOWN, NOT TO DROP IT ON MY HEAD!”

“YOU WERE STANDING TOO CLOSE TO THE FUCKING TOWER!”

“IT HURT!”

“IT HIT YOUR STUPID MASK, YOU BASTARD!”

Dream burst into wheezing laughter.

“Uh,” Bad said intelligently. “What?”

Sapnap stared at Dream. “. . . Why is Tommy in a tower?”

Tommy poked his head over the side of said tower and proceeded to flip them all off.

7.

“It was never meant to be,” Wilbur whispered, a rueful smile on his face. He pressed the button.

“Oh my god,” said Philza, his eyes fixed on it. Slowly, his gaze traveled up to Wilbur. “You didn’t.”

Wilbur smiled. He raised his hand in a mournful salute.

And then Philza was lunging forward, wings spread wide, yanking Wilbur back as explosions sounded around them. The room shook, dust and dirt raining from the ceiling. Both men shut their eyes, bracing themselves.

Gradually, the tremors stopped. Cautiously, Philza looked up, half-crouched over his son.

The room was. . . surprisingly intact, actually. The chair was a few inches away from its original place, and the floor was littered with pebbles, but the walls were mostly undamaged.

Or at least they were, until Tommy tore through them with a shout of “SURPRISE, BITCH!” and lobbed a block of lit TNT at them. Philza jerked away, already knowing that he would be too slow to dodge--

The ‘TNT’ burst into a cloud of glitter. Wilbur and Philza were left blinking stupidly at Tommy as he burst into raucous cackling.

“Oh Prime!” he wheezed, doubling over as he wiped his eyes with one glitter-dusted arm. “You look-- you look so fuckin’ stupid!”

An ender pearl shattered against the stone. Dream appeared, landing lightly next to Tommy. He took in the sight of Philza and a very-much-not-stabbed Wilbur Soot, and breathed a sigh

of relief. “Thank Prime.”

“I-- what?” Wilbur stuttered.

“The TNT I gave you was fake.” Dream shifted to the side, giving Philza and Wilbur a clear view through the hole Tommy had torn through the wall. L’Manburg, which had supposedly been destroyed when Wilbur pressed the button, was intact but buried under copious amounts of glitter. Several people were wandering through the mess, looking dazed. Others were coughing or rubbing aggressively at their faces, trying desperately to get the glitter out of their eyes.

“You--” Wilbur stared in disbelief. “You gave me *glitter bombs*?”

“Yep,” Dream replied cheerily. He absently brushed a hand through his hair, dislodging several clumps of glitter.

“Cleanup’s gonna be a bitch,” Tommy muttered.

Dream shrugged. “Then don’t clean up. L’Manberg looks better with glitter anyways.”

“WHAT THE FUCK!” someone screamed in the distance. Tommy squinted.

“I think that was Fundy,” he muttered. “I’m gonna go talk to him before he has a mental breakdown. Have fun with Wilbur.” He hopped down from the ledge, disappearing from sight.

Philza blinked slowly. “Um.”

Dream clapped his hands together, making the two men jump. “Ah yes, Philza! Welcome to the server by the way. Sorry nobody came to meet you at spawn, we were in the middle of a war.”

“You gave me glitter bombs,” Wilbur repeated blankly.

Dream bobbed his head. “I did. And now I’m going to give you a therapist.”

<CaptainPuffy joined the game>

## 8. *cosplay competition, pt. 1 (credit to Mixy\_ttwara)*

“What the fuck are you wearing?” Wilbur demanded. Tommy blinked and looked down at himself, then back up at Wilbur.

“... what I usually wear?”

The four other revolutionaries stared blankly at him. Tommy glanced down again. He was wearing his usual L’Manberg uniform, why did everyone look so confused?

Ah, it was probably because of the brown wig and sunglasses. And the white contacts. He was cosplaying Eret, after all.

“Uh.” Tubbo shuffled awkwardly. “Why. . . why is your hair brown?”

Tommy blinked. “It’s always like that. . .? Why are you all actin’ so weird?”

“Uh.” Wilbur exchanged glances with the others. “Nevermind.”

---

“If you win, you can have independence.” Dream crossed his arms. “If you lose, you don’t get independence. . . and I get Mellohi.”

Tommy bit his lip. “The disc,” he muttered, then made a show of turning back to L’Manberg and staring contemplatively at it. At this point, the discs weren’t worth much to him anymore-- but they were sticking to the script this loop, and he needed to act like they were the most important things in his life.

(Prime, he’d been such a *jerk*--)

He inhaled sharply and shoved those thoughts aside. “Deal,” he snapped.

“Okay,” Dream said mildly. He promptly turned and walked away, off to reconvene with his team.

“Alright, I need a bow,” Tommy said, turning to the revolutionaries. Tubbo and Fundy began rifling through their inventories.

“It’s sundown,” Wilbur remarked. He stared up at the sky, deep in thought. “. . . Ten paces. I’ll count it off.”

“No armor, Dream!” Tommy called.

Dream gave an acknowledging wave and moved over to a chest. “Make sure nobody takes anything,” he said to Sapnap as he pulled off his netherite helmet.

Everyone froze.

“Uh,” Fundy said intelligently.

Dream turned to them. The fake fox ears adorning his head were slightly squished. He brushed a hand over them and they sprung up again.

“. . . Dream?” George asked. Dream glanced at him. “. . . why are you wearing fox ears?”

“Because,” Dream said, and didn’t give any more explanation. Everyone collectively decided to ignore it, though Wilbur stuttered mid-speech when Dream removed the rest of his armor to reveal that he had a *fox tail* pinned to the back of his pants. Thankfully, things proceeded fairly smoothly after that. In a matter of minutes, Tommy and Dream were standing on opposite ends of the path, readying their bows.

“Okay,” Sapnap said before Wilbur could start counting. “Is nobody going to question why Tommy is dressed up like Eret?”

“Or why Dream has *fox ears*? ” Fundy blurted, sounding slightly hysterical.

“Wait, he’s dressed up like *me*? ” Eret asked.

Sapnap stared blankly at him, then gestured at Tommy. “Uh. Sunglasses? Brown hair? I’m pretty sure that’s a wig, actually. It looks like your hairstyle.”

Eret glanced back and forth between Tommy and Dream, seemingly at a loss for words.

Dream cleared his throat impatiently. “Are we starting or not?”

Sapnap narrowed his eyes. “You--”

“OKAY,” Wilbur interrupted, because he frankly did *not* want to know. “I’M GOING TO START COUNTING NOW. ONE--”

---

“Zero out of ten. Your cosplay fucking *sucked*. ”

“Excuse you? It was better than yours!”

“Says who?!”

“Eret didn’t even realize you were cosplaying him!”

“At least Sapnap did! *Nobody* knew you were cosplaying Fundy!”

“I’m pretty sure Fundy knew, he just didn’t want to say it.”

“. . . Nah, your cosplay was just bad.”

“Excuse you--”

“You are *excused*! ”

“Zero out of ten for you too, you gremlin child--”

“You’re just mad that you lost!”

“I am *not*-- wait, are you wearing contacts?”

“Yeah! Got ’em for Halloween a couple years back.”

“. . . *Fine*, one out of ten. But only because of the contacts.”

“YES! FIRST ROUND GOES TO ME, BITCH!”

## 9. (*credit to Mixy\_ttwara*)

Technoblade narrowed his eyes, taking inventory of his golden apples. There were fewer than he remembered. A thief? But who would come all the way out here? He’d chosen this spot as his retirement location for a *reason*, after all. There was nobody living within a ten-mile radius of him.

Shutting the chest, he huffed and moved towards the next one, only to freeze when he heard a muffled thump. That didn’t sound like one of his pets.

Slowly, he turned, pausing when he heard another thump. It seemed to be coming from below. Quietly, he glided across the floor, careful not to alert the intruder that he was on to them. He reached the ladder and descended, checking each floor as he passed. Occasionally, another thump would reach his ears, growing louder the further down he went. At last he reached his basement.

Technoblade stepped into the stone room, sweeping a cursory glance over it. Nothing seemed out of the ordinary, save for the fact that a section of the floor across from his villagers looked off. Cautiously, he drew his pickaxe from his inventory and pried the block up.

There was another stone block under it, but as Technoblade paused, he thought he could hear voices. Eyes narrowing, he tore through the next block. At the third block, his pick met empty air. Without hesitation, he dropped down, sword drawn and ready to skewer the intruders.

“--*CHANGE LIKE THE TIDES IN THE OCEAN!*” Tommy sang at the top of his lungs, completely ignoring him. “*AT LEAST I THINK, OR AM I DEAD WRONG? FOOT ON THE BRAKE, AT THE LIGHT I DON’T NOTICE--*”

“What,” said Technoblade.

Dream glanced over from where he had been bobbing his head to the song. “Oh hey, Technoblade!” he called over the sound of Tommy’s (surprisingly decent) singing. “Want to join us?”

“What,” Technoblade repeated. “Why are you here. What are you doin’ under my property.”

“Walmart karaoke,” Dream told him, patting the jukebox he was standing next to. “Wanna try?”

Technoblade lowered his sword, speechless. At that moment, Tommy finished up the pre-chorus. Dream turned away, pulling a large stick from his inventory and banging it on the wall in an approximation of percussion as the teenager launched into the chorus.

“So that was the thumping noise,” Technoblade said blandly as he gave up trying to understand the situation and decided to just roll with it. “. . . are you the ones stealin’ my food?”

“Yes,” Dream admitted shamelessly.

“Why?”

“Why not?”

“That’s not an answer, Dream.”

“We needed food.”

“You *have* food.”

“Says who?”

“Dream, you’re wearin’ full netherite.”

“So? I’m homeless, remember?”

“Technically not anymore,” Tommy cut in, grinning widely. Behind them, the jukebox continued to play.

“What-- you can’t live under *my house!*” Technoblade protested, losing his composure in the face of twin forces of insanity.

“Why not?” Tommy and Dream asked simultaneously, both adopting expressions of perfect innocence.

“It’s-- It’s *my house!*” Technoblade spluttered. “You can’t just--”

“It’s *our* house now,” Tommy interrupted. “That’s what you’re all about, innit? Communism or some shit?”

*“I’m an anarchist!”*

Tommy nodded wisely. “That’s what I said, Communism. So you gotta share your house, y’know? Stick to your ideals?”

Technoblade took a deep breath and fought down the urge to strangle the two idiots. “Get out of my house.”

“Nope,” Dream replied cheerily before tilting his head, listening as the next song began. “*We’re no strangers to love,*” he sang. “*You know the rules, and so--*”

Technoblade's axe crashed through the jukebox.

10.

"Oh. Oh *fuck*."

Tommy groaned. Everything *hurt*.

"Fuck-- Tommy, stay awake, okay?" Dream sounded like he was panicking. Dream didn't panic often. Tommy opened his eyes and instantly regretted it.

"*Shit*," he said with feeling. Because they were back in the cell, and there was a bloody potato lying a few feet away.

"You're going to be okay," Dream said. He still sounded like he was panicking. That probably meant he was lying.

"I'm dying, aren't I."

Dream slumped. ". . . Yeah."

"Okay." Tommy let his head rest against the obsidian floor. ". . . Don't revive me this time, okay? I. . . I kinda wanna try being a ghost."

"Okay," Dream agreed, voice shaking.

Tommy patted his hand. "D'nt be sad," he mumbled as his gaze grew distant. "I'll be back. . . get you. . . out. . ."

His labored breathing stuttered once, twice, before stopping altogether. Dream closed his eyes and tried not to scream.

---

"T-Tommy?" Tubbo whispered, his eyes wide with horror.

Slowly, the ghost turned around. Tubbo staggered back into Quackity, shaking.

His eyes were pure white, pupilless like Ghostbur's. Oversaturated crimson dripped down from his hairline, a mark of the beating that had killed him.

"Tommy," Quackity choked out. "What-- what happened to you?"

The ghost tilted his head. "Who's Tommy?"

Tubbo felt like the wind had been knocked out of him. He sunk to his knees, trembling. "You're-- you're Tommy," he whispered. The ghost scowled.

"No, I'm not," he insisted.

"Look, Phantommy, Ghostinnit-- whatever you call yourself," Quackity started, "your name was Tommy. When. When you were a-alive."

"Oh." Tommy's ghost seemed nonplussed. "Sorry, but I'm not Tommy."

Tubbo collapsed to his knees, terrible sobs shaking his body. The ghost instantly panicked, floating forwards and fluttering his hands like he wasn't sure what to do with them. "Uh-- I'm sorry? Please don't cry, I really don't know how to--"

Tubbo just cried harder.

---

"It's gonna be okay," Ghostinnit said, awkwardly patting Tubbo on the back as his sobbing finally tapered off twenty minutes later. "It-it's gonna be okay."

"It's *not*," Tubbo protested, raising his teary eyes.

"Okay, yeah, it's not," the ghost agreed. "It's gonna be *epic*."

Tubbo shuddered. "Tomm--"

"No, Toob, big man, listen to me." The ghost leaned closer, lowering his voice to a whisper. "I remember everything, Tubbo, and I've got ghost powers and whatnot now. Think of the *pranks*."

The shorter boy stilled. "You-- you--"

Tommy grinned widely. "Yeah."

"Yeah what?" Quackity asked warily. Tommy had forgotten he was there. Oops.

". . . Tommy?"

Tommy blinked, turning to face the small crowd that had gathered around the spectacle. They were all staring at him with varying expressions of horror, though Jack Manifold's seemed a little off. Fundy was the one that had spoken, face pale. He took a step back as Tommy's gaze fell on him. "You're. . . you're a ghost?"

Tommy grinned. "My name is Toast," he announced, pulling a glock out of his pocket. "And I am here to steal your kneecaps."



## Chapter End Notes

Tommy + Ghost = Toast. fight me

Sections that have a “pt 1” thing added to them mean that that loop will be continued in later chapters in the future. Also note: These loops are not in chronological order.

Feel free to give me ideas in the comments!

### **Loop Notes**

**9.** Yes, you just got rickrolled.

**10.** Tubbo tries to punch Tommy in the face for making him think he forgot everything--emphasis on *tries*. He kinda goes right through, because. Ghost. The two then embark on a glorious pranking spree, culminating in the glitter-bombing and subsequent break-in of Pandora's Vault. The rest of the server is left in shambles.

# Chapter 3

## Chapter Notes

this chapter is brought to you by: the nitro remix of triple the threat. because it is such a bop.

**Spotlighted comment of the previous chapter:** Random\_Internet\_Persona

*Tommy grinned. "My name is Toast," he announced, pulling a glock out of his pocket. "And I am here to steal your kneecaps."*

### *Shot on iPhone*

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

#### **11.** *(credit to Paper\_T0ast)*

"Oh. Oh shit."

Dream began to clap slowly. "Congratulations, Tommy. You just killed a villager with a rock."

"It was your idea to enchant the fucking pebble with Knockback II!"

"And it was your idea to toss it at his head!"

"I thought he'd faceplant!"

"It was Knockback *II*, not *I*, you idiot--"

"Who the fuck are you calling an idiot, you green bastard--"

"--and now he's crushed under a house. I'm not explaining this to the others."

Tommy blinked. "Explain?"

"One of them's gonna notice eventually," Dream said dryly. "And then they're gonna have questions. And given that you *named* the pebble for some reason--"

"--my goals are beyond your understanding--"

"--people are going to be able to trace it back to you."

Tommy scowled. "They might not!"

"You named it *wife haver*."

"Yeah, so?"

"So unless you want to go pry that pebble out of his skull, or its name was somehow deleted within the past five minutes," Dream deadpanned, "People are going to find out what happened. And then you're going to have to explain why you committed murder."

Tommy wilted. "... Fuck. Okay, fine, you bastard, what the hell do I do?"

"Hide the evidence."

"Thank you, Captain Obvious. I know we gotta hide the fucking evidence, but h--"

"Tommy!" Tubbo called, rounding the corner. He looked up from the clipboard he was holding. "Have you seen--"

He stopped, taking in the deer-in-the-headlights expressions plastered on Dream and Tommy's faces and the corpse lying behind their feet.

"I'll come back later," he decided calmly, turned on his heel, and strolled right back the way he'd come. The two loopers stared as he disappeared around the corner.

"He knows too much," Dream muttered. Tommy kicked him in the leg.

"We're not killing Tubbo, you bastard!"

## 12. *(credit to Starshifting and curry\_powder)*

"Puffy, it's okay," Foolish said, emerald eyes fixed on her horrified expression. "It's. . . it's okay."

"No, it's not!" she screamed, taking a step forward as Ant raised his sword. Behind them, Bad laughed, a dark, twisted thing that sounded nothing like him.

Foolish smiled gently. "It's okay," he repeated, just as Ant brought the sword down.

"NO!" Puffy howled, lunging forward, only to stop short when a resounding *clang* rang through the room. The edge of Ant's blade shivered inches away from Foolish's neck, blocked by a netherite sword.

TommyInnit grinned confidently at the cat hybrid, then threw his weight forward, sending Antfrost stumbling back. The moment their blades were safely away from Foolish, Tommy flicked his wrist, forcing Antfrost to disengage or risk losing his weapon. The teen then slid between Foolish and the members of the Eggpire, assuming a defensive pose. "Hey Eggheads!" he shouted. "Why the fuck wasn't I invited to the party?"

“Tommy!” Bad shouted, yanking his sword out of the inventory. “What do you think you’re doing?!”

Tommy scoffed. “Stealing the spotlight from a *certain fucker who’s hiding in the walls!*” he shouted, raising his voice in the second part of the sentence. Quackity, hidden in the wall, blanched.

Bad faltered. “Wha-- the wall?” he asked, then shook his head. “Wait, no. You’re interfering with our plans, Tommy.”

“Does it look like I care?” Tommy snarked, adjusting his grip on his weapon.

Bad narrowed his eyes. “You’re making a mistake, Tommy,” he warned. “You only have one life left, but if you’re so eager to help. . .”

Without warning, Antfrost lunged forward, sword swinging in a deadly arc. There were shouts of alarm from behind him, but Tommy just narrowed his eyes and parried the blow, kicking his opponent back. Bad joined the fight seconds later, and Tommy hopped nimbly aside as his axe swung through where he’d been standing seconds before. Then he yelped as Antfrost aimed for Foolish’s exposed back, lunging forward and blocking the blow. This left him open to Bad’s next attack, and he barely managed to jerk aside as the axe carved a cut across his arm.

All three fighters backed off for a moment. Tommy was panting, assessing the situation even as he clutched the wound on his arm. It was clear which side was winning.

Bad chuckled, taking a few steps forward. “Tommy, Tommy,” he said, shaking his head, “If you wanted to beat us, you should’ve brought more people.”

Tommy smirked. Hannah, who had snuck around the sidelines, raised her crossbow. Sam saw her just as she pulled the trigger. “TOMMY!” he shouted. “BEHIND--”

His voice died in his throat as the arrow embedded itself in a shield. A shield held by a very, very familiar man dressed in lime green.

“You see, Bad,” Tommy chirped, “I *did* bring more people. In fact, I brought the worst fucking bastard on the server!”

“*Dream,*” George breathed, eyes wide behind his goggles.

“The bombs are ready,” Dream said cheerily, lifting his hand to reveal that he was holding a large red button with EASY stamped across it. “Waiting on your signal.”

The stunned silence was broken by Bad’s laughter. “Do you really think,” he mocked, “that TNT will make a difference? Sam already tried it, and you know what happened?”

“Obsidian protected the Egg or some shit, right?” Tommy shrugged. “Who said it was TNT?”

All amusement abruptly disappeared from Bad’s face, replaced with unease. “What?”

“Tommy,” Sam broke in, eyes burning with rage. “Tommy, *what the hell are you doing.*”

Tommy didn’t so much as glance at him. “OI, QUACKITY, GET THE FUCK OUT HERE. I HAVE A BONE TO PICK WITH YOU!”

“I’M CALLING IN THE FAVOR, TECHNO,” Dream added. “IF YOU CAN DRAG THE EGGHEADS TO CHURCH PRIME AND DUMP THEM IN HOLY WATER, THAT WOULD BE NICE!”

“Bruh,” Technoblade deadpanned, dropping down from a divot in the wall. He landed in a crouch, sword at the ready. Purpled and Quackity followed moments later.

“Tommy!” Quackity shouted, wild-eyed. “Tommy, did you-- did you break Dream out of prison?! What the *fuck--*”

Antfrost, Bad, Ponk and Hannah were glancing between the two hostile parties now, seeming to realize just how outmatched they were. The Red Banquet guests were all staring at either Dream or Tommy in horror.

“Now!” Tommy shouted. Antfrost made an aborted lunge forward just as Dream slammed his finger down on the large red button.

“THAT WAS EASY,” a deep, electronic voice boomed. A second later, blocks of TNT rained from the ceiling-- and exploded into paint and glitter.

“. . . What.” Purpled deadpanned, staring at the now very colorful egg.

Dream inhaled and took a step back, as though preparing to shout something, only to choke when Tommy’s hand slapped over his mouth. He jerked away, spluttering. “Wh-- what the fuck, Tommy?!”

“Wait,” Tommy snapped. “We’re not ready yet.” Ignoring the look Dream sent him, he bounded up to the Egg and producing a large swath of sparkly pink cloth from his inventory.

“In honor of Technoblade’s hair,” he declared solemnly, before reaching up as high as he could and sticking the wad of cloth onto the Egg. It unfurled, revealing that it was, in fact, a bow.

Dream slowly introduced his palm to his unmasked face. Tommy rolled his eyes at his dramatics. “Hurry up and get started!” he shouted.

The older man sighed, then reluctantly peeled his hand away and began to chant in a guttural, incomprehensible language. Sam jerked when Dream’s eyes began to glow, only to find that he was frozen in place. He struggled against the paralysis, to no avail.

Gradually, the chanting picked up speed. A light breeze whipped through the chamber, somehow present despite its underground location. And then suddenly a second Dream was there, identical save for the XD inscribed over his mask. He scanned the scene for a moment before turning to Dream. “**What are you doing?**” he asked tonelessly.

“We got you a gift,” Dream offered cheerily. He pointed at the Egg. “You can. . . make an omelette, or something.”

**“I don’t need to eat,”** XD said blankly. Then he turned slowly, gaze sweeping over the frozen mortals and the red flora, stopping on George. **“But. . . this. . .”**

He turned back to the Egg and tilted his head. When he spoke again, his voice was raspy and incomprehensible.

Bad froze, shuddering once before his face went blank. Then he opened his mouth and replied in the same language, cryptic hisses that sent chills crawling down Tommy’s spine. Antfrost’s head snapped around to stare at him. It was clear that this was not Bad speaking, but the Egg.

XD’s tone shifted, becoming somewhat demanding. The Egg responded in kind, Bad’s voice raising, and the other SMP members watched as the unintelligible argument mounted. At last, it reached its peak, and the Egg snarled and snapped something.

XD stilled. He raised a hand. And then every person in the room doubled over, clutching their ears as a horrible screech rang out. The members of the Eggpire screamed, collapsing, white clothes and red eyes flickering violently between crimson and their original colors.

The chamber shook violently as the Egg’s screeches grew even louder, vines peeling themselves off the walls and lashing out towards the Dream lookalike. The god simply narrowed his eyes and clenched his outstretched hand into a fist.

The Egg gave one last shriek before it appeared to shrink, surface shriveling in on itself. The entire thing disintegrated into a pile of fine powder, topped with glitter and a sparkly pink bow. The crimson flora covering the walls followed suit seconds later, accompanied by an abrupt end to the Eggpire’s screaming.

In the stunned silence, Dream cautiously removed his hands from his ears. Sidestepping a quietly seething XD, he strolled over to the Eggpire, squinting down at Bad. “Unconscious,” he declared. “Techno, could you take them to Church Prime and dump them into the fountain? The Egg should be out of their heads now, but better safe than sorry.”

Technoblade stared at him, then glanced at XD, who had lowered his arm and was now making a beeline for George. “Uh. Okay.” He tossed an unconscious BadBoyHalo over his shoulder, then glanced up at Dream. “. . . I’m assumin’ the Egg isn’t a problem anymore?”

Dream looked at him, looked at the pile of dust that had been the Egg, then looked back at him. Technoblade shrugged and hefted Antfrost onto his other shoulder. “Just checkin’.”

“Wait, wait, wait,” Quackity spluttered, raising his sword. “Dream, Dream. What do you think you’re doing?”

“I wrote down the revive book stuff in one of the books in the prison,” Dream dismissed, waving a hand. “It’s in the chest, if you wanna go get it.”

Sam growled. "You're going back now."

Dream stared blankly at him. "Bold words for a man with no armor or weapons."

Tommy kicked him. "We're not killing Sam."

Dream eyed him. "He deserves it."

"Okay, yeah, he was kinda a bitch," Tommy admitted, "but he got better!"

"That hasn't happened yet. C'mon, just one little stab?"

". . . Mayb--"

"Okay, that's enough," Quackity snapped, "Technoblade, knock him out."

Technoblade paused, a dangerous smile spreading across his face. "I don't recall answerin' to you, Quackity," he said quietly. The duck hybrid took a nervous step back as he turned to face him. "I only agreed to work with you because of this whole Egg thing. It's gone now, so. . ."

There was a minute of tense silence. A drop of sweat rolled down the side of Quackity's face, but he maintained his glare down with Technoblade. At last the piglin hybrid scoffed, turned on his heel and stalked away, dragging along all four members of the Eggpire.

Dream watched him go for a moment, then shrugged and turned to Tommy. The motion instantly caught several peoples' attention, including Quackity, who tensed like he was preparing for a fight.

"Well," Dream said mildly. "Show's over. Time to go."

Sam stepped forward. "You're not going anywhere, Dream."

"Purpled," Quackity called.

Purpled eyed Dream. "How much?"

"We can discuss your fee later--"

"How. Much?"

"A block of netherite!"

". . . Alright."

"And that's our cue to get the hell out!" Tommy shouted, slamming his hand down on the button Dream was still holding.

"THAT WAS EASY," the electronic voice said again, before the ceiling opened and the entire banquet hall was barraged with glitter bombs.

Dream and Tommy disappeared in the ensuing chaos.

### 13.

Dream practically sprinted across the netherrack bridge, diving into the portal. The moment he stepped out the other side, he was soaked with rain. The ground was pockmarked with craters, the smoking remains of Logstedshire visible in the distance.

And right at the end of the path, reaching into the heavens, was a rickety stone tower. At the top of that tower sat one TommyInnit.

“TOMMY!” Dream screamed up at him. Tommy glanced down.

“HEY, DREAM!” Tommy hollered back.

Dream grimaced. “GET DOWN FROM THERE,” he shouted. “IT’S DANGEROUS!”

“I KNOW, YOU BASTARD!” Tommy yelled, then scowled and muttered something that was lost in the wind.

“WHAT?” Dream shouted.

Tommy hesitated, glanced around with narrowed eyes, then looked back down at him. “. . . I’M STUCK!”

Dream stared at him. “*WHAT?*”

“I SAID I’M STUCK!” Tommy huffed, crossing his arms. “I NEED HELP GETTING DO-- DREAM! DREAM, YOU BASTARD, STOP LAUGHING, I WILL SHOOT YOU WITH MY GLOCK I SWEAR TO PRIME--”

### 14. (*inspired by oliverhat*)

Dream towered over Tubbo in the ruins of the community house, walled in with water on all four sides. “I need the disc,” he said calmly, shifting his grip on his netherite axe. “Give it to me, Tubbo.”

Tommy took a deep breath, steeled himself, then jumped down. “NAY!” he cried, landing with a splash in the knee-deep water. “NAY, DOTH NOT--”

“What?” Tubbo asked, staring at Tommy’s helmet. Right, he was still invisible. Dream turned his piercing stare on him.

“Tommy,” he said simply. “Thou art eyeless.”



Tommy forced himself to square his shoulders and glare. “Dream,” he greeted. He turned to Tubbo. “Tubbo, giveth not that gent the discs.”

“Uh,” said Tubbo. “What?”

Dream stepped forward. “Tommy, hark. Thee fuck'd up. Tubbo shall giveth me the discs--”

“NAY!” Tommy shouted. He gestured at the walls of water surrounding them. “Doest this behold liketh a thing I wouldst doth?!”

Dream gritted his teeth. “AYE!” he shouted, grip tightening on his axe in frustration. “Who is't else wouldst doth?!”

“Nay, nay, nay,” Tommy insisted. “Dream, hark--”

“What the fuck is going on?” Fundy asked blankly. “I’m not-- this isn’t a fever dream, right? Because it feels like a fever dream.”

“I think they’re talking in Shakespearean English,” Ranboo offered.

“Yes, thank you Ranboo, very helpful. *Why* are they talking in Shakespearean English?”

“Hark!” Dream shouted. “We wilt returneth to the subject--”

“Can anyone understand him?” Tubbo asked. “Because I can’t.”

“He’s basically tellin’ us to focus,” Technoblade deadpanned. Several people jerked in surprise, suddenly notice the new set of floating armor standing next to Tommy.

“Techn--?”

“Tommy, why the *fuck* would you bring--”

“It’s *Techno*?!” Fundy cried.

“Yes, it’s me, Technoblade, subscribe, thank you, back to the subject. Tommy didn’t do this.”

“Aye, aye!” Tommy cried. “This gent speaketh the sooth! Doest this behold liketh something I wouldst doth?”

Dream scoffed. “Aye, ‘t doest.”

“Look, Dream, Tommy, I don’t know what’s up with you two,” Technoblade deadpanned, “but we’re havin’ a serious confrontation here and I can’t translate for the commoners, so would you mind speakin’ modern English?”

Dream and Tommy offered him identical blank stares. “I speak in thy common tongue,” Tommy protested. “‘Tis simply thy stupidity yond prevents thee from enlightenment.”

“Excuse you,” Technoblade protested, “I am v’ry cunning, thee infant, and thou art m’rely a clotpole who cannot adh’re to the most simple of instructions.”

Tommy gasped like Technoblade had just insulted the queen. “I shall murd’r thee, then danceth on thy bones! Rescind thy claim, fr I am not an infant, I am a man!”

“Tommy, Technoblade,” Quackity snapped, “What the *fuck* are you doing?”

Technoblade offered him a bland stare. “Behold, I knoweth I am not the most trustw’rthy sir,” he intoned flatly, “But Tommy wouldst nev’r doth this. Dream wilt censure that infant, but he is but a scapegoat. Has’t thee frgotten yond Dream hateth Tommy? What evidence doth thee has’t yond that infant didst ‘t?”

Okay, Tommy could admit he was a bit impressed. Who knew Technoblade could speak Shakespearian English? He still got one thing wrong, though. “*I am a man!*” Tommy protested. “*Not an infant, you wench!*”

He was ignored. Technoblade turned back to Dream. “Hold thy tongue and beest silent. Speaketh thy lies nay longeth’r.”

“For fuck’s sake, just *speak normally!*” Quackity exploded.

“I speaketh n’rmally,” Technoblade sniffed. “Now what sayeth thee, Dream?”

Dream stared at him, then turned to Quackity. “Tommy lo hizo. Voló la casa de la comunidad.”

“NO, NO LO HICE!” Tommy shrieked. “CÁLLATE, BASTARDO!”

Tubbo blinked slowly. “Is that. . . is that *Spanish?*”

“Okay, nope, that’s it, I’m out,” Ranboo declared, turning on his heel and marching away. “Adiós.”

“NO VUELVAS!” Tommy shouted at his retreating back.

Fundy looked like he was trying not to scream. “What the *fuck* is happening?!”

## 15. the nyan chronicles, pt. 1 (credit to hhhhhhhh)

“Tommy, no.”

“Tommy, yes.”

“What the hell could you offer him?”

“My soul.”

“Tommy--”

“Relax, big man. I was joking. Though honestly, if I did sell my soul, would it get undone when we loop?”

“I’d rather not find out. So what are you *really* going to offer him?”

“Oh my Prime, Dream, just let me talk to him. Have some faith, will you?”

“Given how the last loop went--”

“We’re talking about this loop, not the last one. C’mon, it’s not like there’s lasting consequences.”

“ . . . Fine.”

---

“Holy shit that actually *worked*?”

“Yep! I told you to have faith, big man--”

“--faith in XD’s *idiocy*?”

“--shhhhh, he can probably hear us!”

“ . . . ”

“ . . . ”

“ . . . so why exactly did you want him to overwrite all the discs on the SMP with the Nyan Cat theme?”

“Think of the memes, Dream. Think of the *memes*.”

---

“Ranboo.”

“Yes?”

“This. . . this is Chirp, right?”

“ . . . Yeah, that looks like Chirp. Why?”

In lieu of answering, Tubbo shoved the disc into a jukebox. A series of high-pitched electric notes played out, followed by an electronic voice repeatedly singing--

“ . . . Nyan?” Ranboo asked uncertainly. “Is that. . . is that the Nyan Cat song?”

“Yeah,” Tubbo answered. He removed the disc, shoving in a Pigstep one instead. The same song began playing.

Ranboo stared at the jukebox. “. . . What?”

Tubbo brushed his bangs to the side. “I tried these discs with another jukebox, too. Played the same thing. Do you have any discs?”

Ranboo couldn’t suppress the full-body flinch that question gave him, and did his best not to think about a buried chest and a single disc lying inside it. “No,” he replied truthfully, “but I can probably go ask around. See if people are having the same issue and whatnot.”

“Okay,” Tubbo replied absently. He yanked Pigstep out of the jukebox, cutting off the semi-annoying music. “You do that.”

---

“Foolish?”

The god looked up. “Hey, Ranboo!” he greeted cheerily, setting down the block of stone he was holding. “What’s up?”

Ranboo fidgeted nervously with his sleeves. “Uh. . . do you. . . do you have any discs?”

Foolish blinked. “Discs? I think I might have one or two in a chest somewhere. Why?”

“Uh. Something’s wrong with Tubbo’s, and I was wondering if it was happening to anyone else.”

Foolish shrugged, making a ‘follow me’ gesture and turning away. Ranboo obliged. “I can take a look,” the totem god said. “I needed a break from building anyways.”

He opened a chest and pulled out Wait, popping it into a nearby jukebox. Nyan Cat music began playing.

“Huh,” Foolish said slowly, then ejected the disc and put in Blocks, only to get the same result.

“That’s strange,” Foolish muttered, strolling over to a different jukebox and shoving Wait into it. Ranboo winced as Nyan Cat began playing again, clashing out-of-sync with the Nyan Cat playing from the first jukebox. “Was Tubbo having this. . . problem too?”

Ranboo nodded. Foolish sighed.

“Well, this could be a glitch,” he said, removing the discs from the jukeboxes. The music stopped instantly, leaving blessed silence behind. “But I doubt it. It’s probably a prank of

some sort, though I don't know how the prankster could've pulled it off. Or who they could be, for that matter. Maybe Fundy? He had a history of pranking, right?"

". . . Maybe," Ranboo agreed weakly. "Well. Uh. Thanks, Foolish. I . . . I better be going now."

"Bye, Ranboo! Good luck figuring this out!"

---

"Ranboo?"

"Hi, Philza," Ranboo greeted nervously.

Philza blinked. "Hey mate. What happened?"

"Uh. . . do you have any discs?"

"Discs?" Philza shook his head. "No, but I think Techno might have some. Why?"

"There's a problem with Tu-my. *My* discs. They're all playing the Nyan Cat theme for some reason."

Philza blinked slowly. "I-- the Nyan Cat theme?"

"The Nyan Cat theme," Ranboo affirmed gravely. "Foolish's too. Do you have any idea why?"

". . . No," Philza said slowly. "You could try asking Techno."

---

". . . What," Technoblade deadpanned, staring at the jukebox he'd just put Pigstep into. "Why. How. What."

"Foolish said it was probably a prank of some kind," Ranboo offered. "Though he's not sure who would do this."

"Or why," Philza muttered, narrowing his eyes at the jukebox. He ejected the disc, then put it back in. When the first notes of Nyan Cat started playing, he pulled it out, then put it back in, and continued to repeat this sequence of actions several more times until--

"Okay, that's enough," Technoblade grumbled, snatching the disc from Philza's hands. "I feel like every time I listen to this, it gets more annoyin'."

Philza had the decency to look sheepish. “Sorry.”

Ranboo studiously ignored the twitching in his own eye. “It’s fine. Uh. I’m. . . I’m gonna go see if anyone has any discs that *aren’t* Nyan Cat.”

Technoblade grimaced. “If you happen to find a Pigstep. . .”

“I’ll let you know.”

---

Ranboo stepped into Kinoko Kingdom and was instantly blasted in the face with the sound of five jukeboxes playing Nyan Cat at the exact same time. How the heck had they coordinated it?

“GEORGE, WAKE UP, HELP ME!” Sapnap screamed. “OH PRIME MAKE IT STOP--”

“NEVER!” Karl shrieked. “ACCEPT NYAN CAT AS YOUR LORD AND SAVIOR--”

Ranboo turned around and walked away. Yeah, no, he wasn’t touching that with a ten foot pole.

## Chapter End Notes

I used online translators for the shakespeare one so I'm sorry if the language is off  
Basic gist of the spanish part: Dream says Tommy did it, Tommy tells him to shut up very impolitely, Ranboo reaches his insanity limit for the day and decides to leave, but tells everyone bye in spanish because if he’s suffering they can suffer with him. As he's leaving, Tommy yells at him to not come back.

### **Loop Notes**

**12.** Yes, the button was one of those plastic ones from Staples. Don't know what I'm talking about? Search up "staples button".

They’ve figured out by now that the best way to destroy the Egg is to sic XD on it. The rest of the server (sans the Syndicate, who stayed neutral, and Tommy) then united to take down Dream (again), but they never found where he was hiding.

Dream and Tommy spent the rest of the loop playing pranks on everyone else.

**13.** Dream stopped laughing at Tommy. Eventually.

**15.** Tommy’s discs became one of the most valuable things on the server. Mostly because they were the only two discs that, when put into a jukebox, would not play Nyan Cat.

# Chapter 4

## Chapter Notes

**Spotlighted comment of the previous chapter:** curry\_powder

*"I has't only one thing to sayeth:*  
AYYYYY CARAMBA DONDE ESTA LA BIBLIOTECAAAAAAAAAAAAA"

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

### 16. adoption arc, pt. 1 (inspired by Trytokillmeorsomething123)

“What. . .” Tommy looked around. “Dream, what-- where are we? *When* are we?”

Dream turned to him, and Tommy did a double take. He looked *young*.

“We’re. . .” Dream said, a wide grin spreading across his face. “Tommy, Tommy-- we’re before the Disc wars.”

“The Disc--” Tommy stopped short. “Holy *shit*.” He turned behind him to see Spawn. “Did I-- did I *just* join the server?”

“We’re so *early*,” Dream breathed.

They stood there in silence for a moment, simply taking in their surroundings. The SMP, back when it was still being built up, before the wars and betrayals and violence. They had a chance, here, a chance to have the life that could have been.

Dream sighed. “Well,” he said quietly. “What do you want to do?”

“What are *you* gonna do?” Tommy challenged. “Because if you’re gonna be an asshole this time around, I’ll kill you.”

Dream snorted. “I think I’ll take the pacifist route, actually.”

“Pacifist-- this isn’t fucking Undertale!”

“Look me in the eye and tell me that I can’t call loop zero neutral.”

Tommy glared.

Dream grinned. “Thought so. Well then, I’ll ask again. What do you want to do?”

“. . . Will you invite Wilbur to the server?”

Dream looked thoughtful. “Yeah,” he decided at last. “But not Schlatt. Schlatt’s staying out.”

Tommy scowled. “Right, fuck him. If you invite him, I’ll stab him. And then I’ll stab you.”

“So I won’t invite him,” Dream said cheerily, clapping his hands together. “Well then. I’m off.”

“Wait, wait, you never told me what you were gonna do!” Tommy protested.

Dream paused, then adjusted his mask and looked him dead in the eye. “I’m going to adopt all the minors,” he said calmly. “All. The minors.”

And then he was gone, disappearing before Tommy could even formulate a reply.

“Wait,” Tommy spluttered to empty air. “Wait, am I a minor--”

### **17. *lava, pt. 1***

Tommy awoke sprawled on the ground. He remained perfectly still, taking in the hard dirt beneath his back and the scent of smoke and gunpowder. He was either back at the Sixteenth. . . or exile.

“Tommy?”

Exile, then. He cracked his eyes open, squinting at the bright sky. His vision was partially obscured by Dream, who was leaning over him, mask pushed to one side and face etched with concern.

“Hey,” he croaked, pushing himself into a sitting position. There was a faint ringing in his ears. He shook his head, trying to clear it, and caught sight of the crater by his feet in the process.

Dream grimaced, offering him a hand. Tommy accepted it and let himself be pulled up, then dusted himself off before he turned to run an eye over Logstedshire.

It was still intact. Looks like the crater had been one of Dream’s customary ‘time-to-traumatize-Tommy’ moments, not him blowing Logstedshire sky-high in a fit of rage.

“So,” Dream said, shuffling awkwardly. He looked uncomfortable. Which was very understandable, because That Feeling When You Get Thrown Back In Time Into A Situation Where You Were A Massive Jerk and all that.

Dream usually deferred to Tommy when they woke up mid-exile, probably out of some sort of guilt, which meant it was up to Tommy to break the tension. And, well, he’d been wanting to do this for a while. He was standing about two feet away from a pile of logs, too. Perfect.

“The floor is lava!” He called, then hopped onto the logs, balancing precariously on the stack. “Five, four, three--”



Dream was already moving, automatically latching onto the wooden wall like a monkey and pulling himself up. When he realized what he was doing, he stopped, turning his head to stare down at Tommy.

“What,” he deadpanned.

Tommy grinned. “Idea, big man. Loop zero, but anytime someone says ‘the floor is lava’, we gotta get off the floor in five seconds. First person to burn in lava loses.”

Dream narrowed his eyes. “You’re on.”

**18. cosplay competition, pt. 2 (credit to Mixy\_ttwara) ([see previous parts of this loop here](#))**

“Dream?” George rubbed his eyes, wondering if he was hallucinating.

“George,” Dream greeted, looking up from the sword he was sharpening. He was wearing a near-perfect copy of George’s outfit, save for the fact that the clout goggles were somehow balanced precariously over his customary smiley mask.

“Dream, is that-- is that *my* shirt?” George stalked closer, grabbing the sleeve of Dream’s blue tee and inspecting it. Dream jerked it away, clapping a protective hand over his arm.

“No,” he lied. Okay, so *maybe* he had stolen one of George’s shirts, and then tailored it to fit him. He had a cosplay competition to win, after all, and George had left his chests unlocked. Besides, the man had like twenty copies of the exact same shirt. He wouldn’t miss one.

“Oh my Prime,” George muttered. “It *is*, isn’t it.”

“No,” Dream repeated, pasting an innocent expression on his face - not that George could see it. The left temple tip of his goggles, previously pinned in the strap of his mask, came loose. Dream hastily tucked it back in before the goggles fell.

George slowly brought his hands to his face. “You’re wearing *clout goggles*,” he said. “*Over your mask.*”

“Yes,” Dream said, like there was nothing wrong with that.

“You’re dressed exactly like me.”

“I have no idea what you’re talking about. This is how I usually dress.”

“Dream.”

“George.”

“That’s my shirt.”

“It’s *my* shirt.”

“How did you get into my house?!”

“I didn’t, because *it’s my shirt*.”

“You’re a terrible liar.”

“But I’m not lying.”

“You--”

Sapnap walked into the room, took one look at the scene, and walked back out.

## 19. (credit to Purplewitchii)

“Okay,” Tommy groaned, pressing the heels of his hands into his eyes. “So fixing everything didn’t work.”

“Your idea of ‘fixing,’” Dream pointed out dryly. “And seeing as we’re back at the Sixteenth, I’d say you’re right. It didn’t work. Which means we’re trying my way next.”

Tommy scowled at him. “Now wait one fucking minute--”

“*No*,” Dream snapped, jabbing a finger at him. “We went through ten loops trying to get your ‘happy ending’, and while I’m all for the server not going down in flames, I want *out* of these fucking timeloops. We got a happy ending, and we ended up back here. So we’re doing it my way.”

Tommy crossed his arms. “And what’s ‘your way’? ‘Cause if it involves killing anyone other than Schlatt, I’m not doing it.”

Dream sighed. “We’re gonna stick to loop zero.”

Tommy stilled. “You mean--”

“It doesn’t have to be the exact script, because Prime knows I’ve forgotten what I said, but as long as the events happen the same way--”

“It’s not gonna work--”

“--you don’t know that! If we stick to baseline, the anomaly might undo itself or whatever.”

Tommy hesitated.

“Look,” Dream muttered, running a hand through his hair. “I’m not-- I’m not asking you to kill your friends or anything, okay? We’re at the Sixteenth, so one of the . . . worst parts is over. Just-- play along. We both want out, and as much as I hate to say it, we need to work together to do that.”

“. . . Fine,” Tommy snarled. “But if it doesn’t work, we’re not doing it again.”

“We’ll see,” Dream said, and that was that.

---

“Shut the fuck up, Dream,” Tommy snapped. He stalked closer, weighing the axe in his hand. “Why shouldn’t I just kill you right now?”

Dream pressed against the wall, his gaze darting between Tommy and the hostile crowd. “I-I-- I can-- uh--”

Tommy stepped closer. “Tell me why I shouldn’t kill you right now, Dream. Tell me.”

*“I’m a bad bitch,”* the man blurted. *“You can’t kill me!”*

There was a pause.

Then Tommy dropped the axe, doubling over with laughter. Dream groaned and pressed his face into his hands.

“Are you--” Tommy gasped. “Are you fuckin’ serious you just--” he sank into another fit of laughter.

“I was panicking, okay,” Dream muttered. “And it just came to mind so--”

“You-- you were going all-- ‘stick to the script’, and then you-- pfft--”

Dream’s ears had gone red. “I was *panicking!*” he insisted. Tommy just wheezed, sinking to his knees as he ran out of oxygen.

“Script?” Tubbo asked uncertainly. “Tommy, what are you-- what are you talking about?”

Tommy just waved a hand, too out of breath to answer.

Dream sighed. “What I *meant* to say,” he muttered, “is that I can bring people back to life.”

“You can-- you can what?”

“Bring people back to life,” Dream repeated with the air of someone who was a hundred and fifty percent done with life. “Schlatt gave me a book, I read it and now I can revive people, don’t kill me or you’ll never see Wilbur again, et cetera.”

“You--” Tubbo began, eyes darting uncertainly from Tommy to Dream. “You can bring Wilbur back?”

“Yes,” Dream enunciated. “And anybody else who dies later.”

"Then. . . then we can't kill him," Tubbo muttered. "If there's a chance. . . but we can't just let him go, either. . ."

Silence descended. Several people in the crowd glanced uncertainly at each other.

Dream rolled his eyes, tipping his head back to look at the ceiling. "Ugh," he grumbled, then pushed himself to his feet and stalked past Tommy, ignoring how several people in the crowd tensed or made as if to lunge forward. Instead, he walked right up to Sam and held out his wrists like he was expecting to be cuffed.

Sam shoved the tip of his sword under his chin. Dream let out a long, exhausted sigh.

"Pandora's Vault is done, right?" he asked tiredly. "Can you lock me in there?"

Sam's eyes narrowed.

"Look," Dream muttered. "I know I'm not getting out of this, but if you leave me alive, I'll bring Wilbur back."

"What's the script you were talking about?" Sapnap asked.

Dream scowled. "Ask Tommy," he offered.

The teenager in question was recovering from his wheezing fit, slowly pushing himself to his feet. At Dream's words, he scowled. "Oi, bitch, don't throw me under the bus!"

"What's the script?" Sapnap repeated, eyes flinty. Sam's sword pressed harder against Dream's neck, enough to draw blood.

Dream let out a long, long sigh before looking up at the ceiling. "Okay, fine. Tommy and I are trapped in a timeloop and we're trying to get out of it by imitating the original timeline as much as possible, but then I threw it and then Tommy doubly threw it, so screw that I guess."

"Dream, what the fuck?" Tommy demanded.

"It's not like they'll believe me," Dream deadpanned, taking a step back when Sam's blade pressed forward. "See?"

"You're right," Sam said icily. "I don't believe you. What's the script?"

"It's unimportant," Dream half-truthed. "Look, we got a schedule to keep, you have places to be, so if we could just hurry up and get this over with--"

"Why the fuck are you so eager to get thrown in jail?" Sapnap demanded.

"Because jail is great," Dream said, dry as dust. "I love being trapped in a tiny room without air conditioning and eating raw potatoes every day."

Sam lowered his sword. "What is *wrong* with you?"

“Everything.”

**20.**

Dream stared at the raccoon.

The raccoon stared back.

“How did you mess up a water breathing potion that badly?”

The raccoon hissed angrily and tried to swipe at him, only to trip over the fabric surrounding it and faceplant.

“No, seriously,” Dream continued, unperturbed by the murder attempt. “Raccoons are a *land* animal. *How?*”

The raccoon that had been Tommy glared balefully, then proceeded to dig through the pile of clothing. He came up moments later with his communicator, and painstakingly began to type something out on it.

*<TommyInnit> whispers to you: thwrre wras fir jn yhe cjest*

Dream squinted. “I don’t think I can understand that.”

*<TommyInnit> whispers to you: fuck yuo*

*<TommyInnit> whispers to you: ouy rtry typpoing wiuthoot oppwsbvle thymbs*

“Amazing how the only thing you spelled right was ‘fuck’.”

Tommy chucked his communicator at Dream’s head.

## Chapter End Notes

Translation of Tommy's messages: "there was fur in the chest," "f you," "you try typing without opposable thumbs".

@Trytokillmeorsomething123, I’m writing the adoption arc please let me keep my kneecap privileges

### **Loop Notes**

**16.** Big brother Dream is on the move. Look forward to more on this loop in the coming chapters.

**19.** This occurs fairly early in the time loops, so Dream and Tommy aren’t quite friends yet.

**20.** Pranking opportunities abound.



# Chapter 5

## Chapter Notes

Happy (belated) L'Manberg Independence Day! (7/29/2020)

If you want a translation for that one loop in 21., look at l1ght's comment on page 2 of the comments; they translated it all.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

### 21. *(credit to Smallest, akailana, and Multi\_fandom\_dump)*

“Ten paces, fire!”

“This again?” Dream muttered, spinning around. Tommy grinned back at him, and Dream had a second to realize that he was aiming a glitter-rigged, firework-loaded crossbow rather than a regular bow and arrow. It took him another second to realize that Tommy had pulled the trigger, but by then it was too late.

“What the *f--*”

---

“Ten paces, fire!”

Tommy turned around and was nearly knocked off his feet by a Knockback-I-enchanted pebble. “OW!” he howled, staggering and clutching his sternum. A new bruise was already forming under his fingers. “What--”

“Revenge is sweet,” Dream sang. Tommy flipped him off.

---

“Ten paces, fire!”

Tommy and Dream turned around and engaged in an intense staring match.

“Uh,” Tubbo called uncertainly. “Tommy?”

“Hurry up and shoot him!” George shouted.

Lightning-quick, Tommy clapped his hands in front of his face. Dream blinked.

Tommy jabbed a finger at him. “AHA!” he crowed.

Dream scowled. “That’s cheating--”

“Nobody said we couldn’t move,” Tommy chirped. He grinned widely. “So. Independence?”

“Fine.”

---

“Ten paces, fire!”

“This is bullshit,” Tommy griped as they returned to the duel for the seventh time in a row.

“Bull. Shit. Stupid fuckin’ timeloops must be glitching or something.”

Dream tossed his bow over his shoulder, pulling out a deck of cards. “Uno?”

“You’re on.”

---

“Ten paces, fire!”

Tommy pulled out a deck of cards he had swiped from Wilbur. “Old Maid,” he snapped.

“We’ve played Go Fish three times already, I’m not doing it again.”

“You’re just sore you lost.”

“I will fucking murder you, you bastard--”

---

“Ten paces, fire!”

Without hesitation, Dream turned around and lobbed an egg at Tommy. It splattered across Tommy’s clothes.

The teenager opened his mouth to say something, only to get bombarded with more eggs. Chickens sprung up on the path, clucking in confusion. Tommy brought up a shield in a desperate attempt to protect himself, but it was already too late.



Dream cackled as he hurled another egg.

---

“Ten paces, fire!”

“EAT ICE, BITCH!” Tommy shrieked. Dream hadn’t even fully turned around before he was smacked in the shoulder with something. . . cold.

“Did you just throw a snowball at me?” he asked in disbelief. “I-- how?”

Tommy smirked, hefting another snowball. “Snow doesn’t melt in your inventory.”

“Ah,” Dream said mildly. “Well then, I should let you know that I brought *more* eggs this time.”

“Bring it, *bitch*.”

---

“Ten paces, fire!”

Tommy looked Dream in the eye, then held out his fist.

Dream sighed. “Fine. Rock, paper, scissors, shoot.”

Tommy cursed when Dream beat his rock with paper. “Best out of three,” he demanded.

Dream obliged. “Rock, paper, scissors, shoot.”

“Ha!” Tommy cried. Dream scowled.

“Rock, paper scissors, shoot!”

“Best out of five,” Tommy wheedled.

“Just accept that you lost,” Dream grumbled.

“*Never*.”

“Um,” Fundy cut in, looking very, very confused. “Excuse me, but what the fuck is going on?”

---

“Ten paces, fire!”

Dream turned around, tucked his bow into his inventory, and began signing aggressively at Tommy.

Tommy signed right back with double the vitriol, punctuating his sentence with a sharp jab of his pointed middle finger. Dream gasped like an offended grandmother.

“Tommy,” Wilbur said slowly. “What the fuck are you doing?”

“Shut up, Wilby,” Tommy said without looking away from Dream’s rapidly-moving hands. Wilbur instantly went silent, gaping like a fish at the nickname. “We’re having a diss battle in sign language.”

“Isn’t-- isn’t this supposed to be a duel?” Tubbo asked. “Like. . . like with bows and everything?”

Dream finished up his turn. “Would you rather us be shooting each other?” he asked dryly.

“W-well, no, but--”

Dream nodded. “Exactly. We’re dueling, just untraditiona-- where did you learn vocabulary like *that*?”

Tommy grinned impishly. “Phil taught me a few loops back.”

“Philza. Of course.”

---

“Ten paces, fire!”

Dream produced a pen and a notebook. “A Tic-Tac-Toe battle for L’Manberg’s independence.”

“I accept your challenge,” Tommy intoned gravely, producing his own pen. “Prepare to be defeated.”

They then proceeded to tie ten rounds of Tic-Tac-Toe, all while ignoring the confusion going on around them.

---

“Ten paces, fire!”

Dream produced a pen and a notebook. “Tic-Tac-Toe, but nine by nine.”

“We’re still gonna tie, Dream.”

“Worth a shot.”

---

“Ten paces, fire!”

“Tic-Tac-Toe, but fifteen by fifteen.”

“Dream--”

“Come on, Tommy. We can’t tie *forever*.”

“Bet.”

---

“Ten paces, fire!”

“T--”

“If you say ‘Tic-Tac-Toe but twenty by twenty, I will end you. We have tied on every single game in the past three loops--”

“I was actually going to say twenty-one by twenty-one, but okay.”

Tommy felt fully justified in trying to stab Dream with his pen.

---

“Ten paces, fire!”

One end of the bridge burst into flames. The people watching from the sidelines shouted in alarm, scrambling back.

“ARSON, BITCH!” Tommy cackled, ripping pages out of a book and tossing them into the fire.

“TOMMY, WHAT THE FUCK!” Wilbur shrieked.

“YOU SAID FIRE!”

“THAT’S NOT WHAT I MEANT!”

“My Tic-Tac-Toe book,” Dream mourned as Tommy ripped another handful of pages from it.

---

“Ten paces, fire!”

Dream turned around. “∴τ|| ϯ| ϯ ||J= 3:::lj ∙|| 3JJ+?”

Tommy scowled. “☹️○ ■□◆ □●☒✕■♪ ☒■□♣♠□ □□◆■♠ □× ×◆♣&✕■♪ ◆✕♣  
☞◆☒☞☞◆□♠ ◆✕◆♣ ♠□◆☞ ♠□◆ ♀☒◆☒☒♠.”

Dream blinked. “| 5 7 7J7 . . .” he started slowly. “| 5 7 7J7 ∴| 7 4ϯ| 7 45?”

“✕◆□.” Tommy grinned. “☙☒✕◆, ♠□◆ ♣☒■ ◆■♠♠□◆◆☒■♠ ○♠?”

“7J.: 5J7 ||J= ::7 ϯL.:57 77 ϯ ∙/L?” Dream shot back. “| 7 7J=+77 7 7L·L·7  
ϯ 7J7 4::J+L ∴J5 L:/5::5| 7L7|| =J.: L·7 ϯL.: 7||5.:| ϯ5.”

“☞■♣♣☒■◆○♠■◆ ☒◆♠✕□♀□□&.”

“7 7J5L·L:/|57?”

Tommy stared. “✕♠◆, ◆♣♠♠ ♠□. ☞☒◆♠ ♠□◆ ♀♠♠■ ●✕◆✕■♪ ◆■♠♠□ ☒  
□□♣&?”

“|-- 7J, 7J | 7J7L· 7J7 -- 5L.:| J=57||, ∴7J7 7=ϯ| JJJJ+?”

“Can anyone understand what they’re saying?” Tubbo asked. “Because I can’t.”

“I didn’t think it was physically possible for a human to make sounds like that,” Punz muttered, looking mildly disturbed.

Tommy grinned. On the other side of the bridge, Dream shifted.

“... ∴7J 5J| ϯ | ∴J5 7=∙J77?”

Tommy’s head snapped towards him. “Wait, *what?!?*”

22. *the nyan chronicles, pt. 2* ([see previous parts of this loop here](#))

Ranboo awoke to a crash and a harsh, discordant screech. Leaping out of bed, he summoned his axe and rushed outside, expecting the worst.

Instead, he found his platonic husband standing over the broken remains of their jukeboxes, dressed in pajamas and a sledgehammer in his hands. “Tubbo?” he called cautiously.

Tubbo slowly turned to him. “Someone is going to die today,” he promised darkly.

Ranboo took a step back. “Uh. . . why?”

“Can you hear it, Ranboo?”

“No?” Ranboo answered, half confused and all concerned. Was. . . was Tubbo hearing voices?

Tubbo leaned in, his blue eyes glinting eerily in the moonlight. “Listen.”

Ranboo hesitated, then tried to focus on his hearing. All he heard was the wind around them. “I don’t--”

*“Listen.”*

Ranboo narrowed his eyes, straining his ears. Underneath the wind, there was another sound, almost like. . .

“Nyan cat?” he asked incredulously.

“Do you know what’s happening, Ranboo?” Tubbo asked “Did you read your communicator?”

“No. . .?” Ranboo realized he was still holding his axe, and hastily dropped it back into his inventory before he pulled out his communicator.

*<Sapnap>: whoever decided it was a good idea to play nyan cat at two in the morning, your days are numbered*

*<GeorgeNotFound>: wait i thought it was karl?*

*<KarlJacobs>: you think I would do that? i’m hurt </3*

*<Sapnap>: all of them are playing at the exact same fucking time*

*<Sapnap>: its so LOUD*

*<FoolishG>: so I’m not the only one that woke up to nyan cat blasting from my jukeboxes?*

*<CaptainPuffy>: you too? mine won’t stop playing*

*<Sapnap>: the disc isnt coming out*

*<Sapnap>: wait*

*<FoolishG>: oh no*

*<Sapnap>: i don't think there IS a disc*

*<KarlJacobs>: DID YOU JUST BREAK OUR JUKEBOXES*

*<Sapnap>: yup no discs, just an empty jukebox*

*<GeorgeNotFound>: you are a menace*

*<Sapnap>: pot meet kettle*

*<Sapnap>: oop gtg karl's on a warpath*

*<CaptainPuffy>: wait wait wait so its the jukeboxes playing the song?? not the discs?*

*<FoolishG>: nope*

*<FoolishG>: think this is the same guy who overwrote all the discs on the server?*

*<CaptainPuffy>: probably*

*<CaptainPuffy>: who else would it be?*

*<Technoblade>: give me a name*

*<Technoblade>: so I can know who to kill*

*<Tubbo\_>: i think every jukebox is playing nyan cat*

*<Tubbo\_>: at the exact same time*

*<Tubbo\_>: I can hear it from here*

*<FoolishG>: when you say EVERY jukebox, do you mean like every jukebox that exists or*

*<Tubbo\_>: brb gonna go find a sledgehammer*

*<CaptainPuffy>: a sledgehammer? Why*

*<CaptainPuffy>: ah nvm*

*<FoolishG>: they keep playing even in my inventory help*

*<Nihachu>: who would do this?*

*<FoollishGamers>: fundy?*

<Fundy>: *listen i like pranks*

<Fundy>: *but i'm not insane enough to rig every jukebox on the server to play nyan cat*

<Fundy>: *AT 2 AM IN THE MORNING*

<Nihachu>: *who else would it be?*

<Fundy>: *not to point fingers but tommy's been suspiciously quiet*

<Technoblade>: *Tommy. Got it.*

<Ph1lzA>: *wait techno no*

<Ph1lzA>: *TECHNO*

"Ah," Ranboo said. He eyed the shattered remains of their jukebox, then looked up at Tubbo. "That's. Something."

"Oh, it's *something* alright," Tubbo hissed, eyes wild with sleep-deprivation-induced rage. "I'm gonna-- I'm gonna find every jukebox on the server, and then I'm gonna *bash it to pieces*."

"Right, right." Ranboo nodded nervously. "And I'll help, but let's get some sleep first--"

"No."

Well, it was worth a try. "At least change out of your pajamas?"

Tubbo loosened the death grip he had on his sledgehammer. "Fine," he decided, then marched back into the mansion.

Ranboo sent one last mournful glance at the remains of their jukeboxes before following.

### 23. lava, pt. 2 ([see previous parts of this loop here](#))

Dream hummed, turning in a slow circle as he took in Technoblade's house. "Well, I know Tommy's here," he said casually.

Technoblade froze. "Um. No, uh, no he's not."

Dream stared at him for a long moment before he sighed, turning away. "Well, it doesn't matter. I just came here to say one thing."

Technoblade narrowed his eyes, hand drifting towards the sword in his inventory. "And that is. . .?"

Dream smirked, then hopped onto Technoblade's ladder and hung there with one hand. "The floor is lava. Five. . ."

Tommy, hidden with an invisibility potion, silently spewed every single curse word he could think of as he clambered onto a crate while trying to stay as silent as possible. The crate shook dangerously but held under his weight, and Tommy sent up a mental thanks to Prime that it didn't creak. Technoblade stared at Dream with a befuddled expression. "What are you doing?"

"Two, one," Dream finished, then shot Technoblade a grin. "Just a little inside joke. Don't worry about it."

Technoblade blinked slowly. "'The floor is lava'?"

"Yup." Dream dropped back onto the ground, then brushed imaginary dust off his shoulder. "Well, I'm off."

Tommy waited until the door swung shut, then slid off the crate. "That *bastard*," he seethed.

Technoblade slowly turned to him. "You gonna explain?"

Tommy ignored him, instead heading over to one of Technoblade's chests. He pulled the lid up. Ah, golden apples. Perfect.

"Hey, what are you-- no, put that-- Tommy, that's *my* gapple, you can't just--"

#### 24. *the adventures of dreaxter, pt. 1 (credit to curry\_powder and Silver\_Melody)*

"Dreaxter?" Tommy demanded. "What kind of fucking name is *Dreaxter*?"

"*Dream and Specter*," Dream huffed, crossing his arms. "*You went with Toast, you have no room to judge.*"

"But *Dreaxter*?" Tommy wrinkled his nose. "Why didn't you go with like-- 'Ghream' or something?"

Dream shuddered. "*Look, I know we're going for cursed names, but I have standards.*"

Tommy considered that. "Okay, yeah, if someone was calling me Ghommy every day I'd probably flip and go polterjest on them."

"*Poltergeist.*"

"That's what I said."

"*No, you pronounce it 'polter-giest.*"

"It's 'polter-jest.'"

"*'Jest', like heist but with a g.*"

"Nuh-uh. I'm right, you're wrong, end of discussion."



Dream buried his face in his hands. “*Tommy--*”

“Dream?”

Both loopers turned to see Sapnap, who was standing on the path and staring at them.

“*Sapnap!*” Dream exclaimed. “*Tell Tommy that it’s pronounced polter-giest, not polter-jest!*”

Sapnap took a step back. “Dream,” he said weakly. “Dream, you’re-- you’re a ghost.”

“*Yup! My name’s Dreaxter!*”

“How. . .” Sapnap choked out. Dream blinked.

“*Are you okay?*”

Sapnap shook his head. “I-- no, Dream, how did you die?”

Dream’s smile dimmed. “*Don’t remember much,*” he said distantly. “*I was cold, and tired. Really tired.*”

Sapnap stared at him and said nothing. Dream shook himself, smile reappearing. “*But anyway, tell Tommy that he’s pronouncing it wrong.*”

“I am *not* pronouncing it wrong,” Tommy protested. “*You’re* the one pronouncing it wrong. You’re projecting your flaws onto me.”

Dream’s face twisted. “*That’s not-- that’s not how projection works.*”

They both looked over at a strangled sound. Sapnap had his face pressed in his hands. His breathing was uneven, as though he was struggling to keep himself calm. Dream drifted closer.

“*Sapnap? Are you okay?*”

Sapnap let out a humorless laugh. “Am I-- *no*, Dream--Dreaxter, I’m not, what the *fuck--*”

“*Are you sad?*” the ghost asked. He produced a fistful of. . . something from his hoodie pocket. “*Here, have some glitter.*”

Sapnap shook his head. “I don’t-- wait, *glitter?*”

In answer, Dream threw whatever he was holding in Sapnap’s face. Sapnap flinched back and shut his eyes, arms coming up to protect his head from whatever projectile Dream had just tossed at him. When several long seconds had passed and nothing hit him, he cautiously opened one eye.

Dream beamed at him, hair dusted with glitter. “*Glitter,*” he affirmed. “*Glitter makes me happy.*”

Tommy began coughing loudly, almost like he was trying not to laugh. Sapnap paid him no mind, instead lowering his arms and glancing down at himself. Sure enough, he was covered in glitter. Shiny, silver-green glitter. He looked back up at Dreaxter.

The ghost shuffled awkwardly, a motion that didn't quite translate without legs. *"Do you feel better?"* he asked.

The look on Sapnap's face shifted from 'angsty inner turmoil' to 'what the fuck'. "Is-- is your glitter like Ghostbur's blue or something?" he asked, sounding slightly hysterical.

"Yes," Dreaxter lied. Not that Sapnap needed to know it was a lie. He wasn't about to give up an opportunity to toss glitter in peoples' faces. *"Do you want more?"*

"Uh." Sapnap ran a hand through his hair, then grimaced when it came away coated with glitter. "I'm good, thanks."

*"You don't look good."*

"I'm fine," Sapnap insisted.

Dreaxter reluctantly put away the handful of glitter he had pulled out. ". . . Okay, if you say so."

Tommy's coughing devolved into full-on cackling.

**25. adoption arc, pt. 2** (credit to Trytokillmeorsomething123) ([see previous parts of this loop here](#))

"You know," Tubbo hummed. "Dream doesn't seem like a bad guy."

Tommy dropped the block he was holding and rounded on him. *"What?"*

Tubbo blinked. "Uh. . . Dream doesn't--"

"No, I heard you the first time," Tommy snapped. "What the-- what the *hell*, Tubbo."

Tubbo shrugged. "When I first got to the server, he showed me around, introduced me to Sapnap and George, stuff like that. He seems pretty friendly!"

Tommy rubbed his temples. "Tubbo-- Tubbo, big man, Dream is a *bastard*."

Tubbo's eyes darkened. "Was he mean to you?"

Tommy hastily backpedaled. "No, no, he wasn't-- or he *was*, but not really-- argh. It's kinda complicated?"

Tubbo's eyebrows rose.

“Look,” Tommy huffed. “You can’t trust him, Tubbo. He’s gonna-- he’s gonna try to *adopt* you.”

Tubbo frowned and heaved another block onto the wall he was building. “Um. Okay? Bit early for that, I’d like to get to know him first.”

“Do you see *nothing* wrong with this?”

Tubbo blinked slowly. “You make it sound like he’s trying to kill me or something,” he pointed out. “What’s so bad about adoption?”

“It’s-- it’s *Dream*,” Tommy protested, at a loss for words. The other boy sighed.

“That doesn’t explain anything, Tommy.”

Tommy made a frustrated noise and slammed his next block down with more force than strictly necessary.

## Chapter End Notes

combining two prompts so neither prompter is satisfied? couldn’t be me ahahahaha  
The Wingdings font for Tommy is kinda not-mobile-friendly for some reason? So sorry about that.

On another note: MY SENSE OF HUMOR HAS RETURNED HALLELUJAH

### **Loop Notes**

**21.** The loops were stuck on the bridge duel for a while. Tommy still wants answers from Dream.

**22.** Never underestimate the magnitude of XD’s simping for George. Seriously. All Tommy had to do was tell him that George liked the Nyan Cat song.

**24.** He would have called himself Ghream or Drost, but it was too cursed for even him.

# Chapter 6

## Chapter Notes

### PLEASE READ THE BELOW CLARIFICATIONS:

**1. I won't write every prompt.** All of your ideas are absolutely amazing and I live off of the chaotic energy they feed me, but my brain sometimes can't come up with a way to write it.

**2. I have no plans to bring anyone else into the loops.** This is because:

**3. This fic has a plot.** It's going to be a very, very slow plot because the main focus of this fic is pure crack, but it will make an appearance. Eventually. It's not going to affect non-plot-specific loops, because the loops aren't written in chronological order (except for blurbs that belong to the same loop), so I can advance the plot and continue the crack at the same time. If the above explanation doesn't make sense, please let me know (;v; )

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

**26.** *(cosplay competition, pt. 3 (credit to Mixy\_ttware) ([see previous parts of this loop here](#))*

“Uh.”

Tommy glanced at Technoblade. “What?”

Technoblade stared blankly at the outfit Tommy had donned. He had foregone his usual red-and-white t-shirt, instead sporting a white dress shirt and a royal red cape that he'd gotten from who knew where. A crown was nestled in his hair.

Wilbur appeared around the corner, staring down at his communicator. “Tommy,” he called, looking up. “Why-- what the *hell* are you wearing?”

Tommy scowled at him. “What, I can't wear capes?”

“I-- no,” Wilbur said, looking bewildered. “You're, that's-- what happened to your normal outfit?”

“This *is* my normal outfit.”

“Pretty sure it's not,” Technoblade grunted. He grabbed the edge of the cape, ignoring how Tommy yelped indignantly and tried to tug it away. “Is this- is this a *shower curtain*?”

“No,” Tommy lied.

“It *is*,” Technoblade muttered incredulously. “Where did you get a shower curtain?”

Tommy scowled. “It's not a shower curtain,” he insisted. “It's- it's my royal cape.”

“Uh-huh,” Technoblade said, finally releasing his grip on the cloth. His gaze turned to the crown. “. . . that’s real gold, isn’t it.”

“Maaaaaybe,” Tommy hedged.

“I’m part piglin, Tommy. I know what real gold looks like.”

Tommy gained a mutinous look. “You don’t know shit, bitch.”

“Where did you get it?”

“What, the crown?” Tommy adjusted it. “Made it myself. Pretty great, innit?”

“What about the gold for the crown?”

Tommy shifted. “I might have committed some theft from the government.”

Wilbur looked like he was about to have an aneurysm. “You snuck into the L’Manberg vaults?!”

Tommy crossed his arms. “I had help! It was fine!”

Technoblade eyed him. “Did you leave any evidence?”

“Of course not,” Tommy sniffed.

“. . . Good job,” Technoblade said, then turned with a dramatic flare of his cape and stalked away. Scowling, Tommy tried to copy him, only for the end of his shower curtain (cape, it was a *cape*) to smack Wilbur in the face.

“Oh shit! Wil, I am so sorry--”

## **27. (credit to DanganronpaFan0519)**

“Hey, Dream.”

Dream looked up from the book he was reading. “Oh, hey, Tommy.”

Tommy grinned. “Let me get exiled again so we can actually be lads on tour.”

A pause. Dream set his book down. “. . . Give me an excuse to get you exiled, and you’ll have a deal.”

---

“You know,” Dream said flatly as he rowed the boat, “When I said ‘give me an excuse’, I didn’t mean ‘cause massive amounts of property damage and traumatize Sam for life’.”

Tommy shrugged unrepentantly. “I’m saving you the trouble of canceling the project, big man.”

Dream sighed. “I paid a stack of diamonds for the prison--”

“--which you’re not gonna need, because we’re gonna go completely off the fucking rails.”

The boat slowed. “. . . What?”

Tommy grinned. “How do you feel about building an empire?”

---

“We’re not calling it Business Bay: Electric Boogaloo.”

“C’mon, Dream--”

“*No*,” Dream enunciated. “Think of a better name.”

Tommy scowled. “. . . The Principality of Prime.”

Dream looked thoughtful. “That. . . works, actually, given that we both established Church Prime. We can share the ‘prince’ title.”

“Pog. Now all we gotta do is build shit.”

---

“That,” Dream said flatly, “is the ugliest palace I have ever seen.”

Tommy scowled. “You try building, mister totally-not-homeless--”

*“I have a house!”*

---

“--neutral ground,” Dream finished, hands folded in front of him. Technoblade, sitting across from him, shifted uncomfortably.

“So let me get this straight,” he started flatly. “You just built an empire-- and you want the Antarctic Anarchists to back it?”

“It’s a principality,” Dream corrected. “More of a neutral ground, like Church Prime.”

“Dream,” Technoblade said flatly. “We’re called *anarchists* for a reason.”

Dream shrugged. “It’s a principality only in name. We’re not actually gonna rule anyone, since Tommy and I’ll be the only ones living here. We just need you to officially recognize it as a neutral entity. Not asking you to pay or anything.”

“And what do we get in return?”

“A nonpartisan, fighting-free spot on this server and a safe haven if you need to hide somewhere,” Dream offered.

Technoblade leaned back in his chair. “How do I know this isn’t some backstabbin’ scheme? Last time I worked with Tommy, he seemed pretty fine with throwin’ me under the bus.”

Dream hesitated, then sighed. Technoblade stiffened as the other man reached up and unclasped his mask, setting it down on the table.

Dream met Technoblade’s stare, gaze firm and unwavering. “I’m willing to give away my mask as insurance,” he said calmly. He reached into his inventory and produced Mellohi. “And Tommy agreed to trade one of his discs for your backing.”

Technoblade stared at the two objects laid out in front of him. He *knew* their significance, the power they held over the people they belonged to. Or at least, the power they *had* held. The time loops had changed that. But Technoblade- and the rest of the server at large- had no idea.

Which was why Technoblade agreed to the deal. Dream grinned victoriously and pushed the mask and the disc across the table to Technoblade, who stashed them away. The two men stood, giving each other a mutual nod of respect in lieu of shaking hands.

“Pleasure doing business with you, Dream.”

“Pleasure’s all mine.” Dream swept past him, his newly-crafted purple cloak swirling dramatically. “Let me show you the way out.”

---

Tubbo stared into the depths of the portal, tugging nervously at his tie. Wearing a suit in the sweltering heat of the Nether was absolute hell, but he had bigger concerns at the moment. Namely, how would Tommy react when he saw him?

Dream hadn't forbidden visitation; if anything, he'd *encouraged* it. He'd set up a new portal system for easier travelling, and only asked that people wait a week before visiting Tommy, citing that the teenager needed time to settle down first.

But Tubbo had been the one to exile Tommy. Sure, Dream had been the one pushing for his exile, but it was Tubbo that had made the final decision. It had been L'Manberg or Tommy, and despite his promise of 'them against the world', he had ultimately chosen the nation over his best friend. He regretted it more than anything, but now that the exile order had been placed, he couldn't rescind it. Not without bringing Dream's wrath down on their heads.

Tubbo didn't really remember the look on Tommy's face when he'd been exiled. He'd been too scared to look his friend (were they still friends?) in the eyes. All he knew was that when Dream had been leading Tommy away, Tommy hadn't so much as glanced back.

Tubbo took a deep breath. He. . . he was scared, but he had to go see Tommy. Had to make sure that he was okay. Had to apologize for going back on their promise. He checked his inventory one more time, hand brushing over the two compasses residing there, then squared his shoulders and stepped into the portal.

The dizzying purple warped around him and faded away. Tubbo blinked the lingering swirls from his vision, then looked up.

A giant palace constructed entirely from cobblestone towered over him. Its doors were easily twice his height, painted in purple and emblazoned with a white cross. Violet banners with the same symbols hung on either side of the door and beneath the tinted stained-glass windows, and flags of the same design fluttered in the wind atop the parapets.

It was both magnificent and the ugliest thing he had ever seen. Tubbo gaped up at it and tried to figure out if he was hallucinating.

"Tubbo!"

Tubbo whipped around at the sound of Tommy's voice, and saw a blur of purple heading straight for him. He yelped and stumbled back, raising his arms in a weak attempt to stave off the oncoming attack.

Tommy crashed into him full speed, knocking him to the ground. Tubbo screamed and tried to shove him off, only to stop and blink when he realized that he was being *hugged*. "T-Tommy?"

Tommy released him, rolling to the side and sitting up. "You came to visit!"

"I-- yeah," Tubbo said, brain scrambling to catch up with the current situation. "Uh. How, how are you?"

Tommy beamed. "I'm doing great, big man! Even better now that you're here." He hesitated. "Didn't expect you to visit, actually. I thought you were mad at me. Are you mad at me?"

"No!" Tubbo blurted. "No, no, Tommy-- oh Prime, I'm so sorry!"



Tommy was taken aback. “Sorry? For what?”

“For exiling you!” Tubbo cried, frustrated that Tommy didn’t seem to be taking him seriously. “I-- I broke our promise--”

“Tubbo.” Tommy stared him straight in the eyes. “It’s okay. I forgive you.”

Tubbo gaped at him. “I-- you can’t just--”

“Why not?” Tommy crossed his arms. “I do what I wanna do. And I wanna forgive you. So you’re forgiven.”

Tubbo gritted his teeth. “Tomm--”

“No,” Tommy interrupted. “Shut up. I was mad at first, okay, but I get why you did it. Dream didn’t give you a choice. Well, he did, but it was a shit choice with shit options. And--” he sighed. “If I were in your place, I dunno what I’d have chosen. To be fair, I did fuck up Dream’s big project. No way was he gonna sit back and take it.”

“But-- but *exile*. For property damage. It wasn’t--” Tubbo slumped. “It wasn’t fair, Tommy.”

“I know,” Tommy muttered. “But seriously big man, I don’t blame you. Dream was being a bastard.”

Tubbo said nothing.

Tommy rolled his eyes. “Exile’s not that bad,” he said at last. “Dream’s here to keep me company. He’s actually a pretty funny guy when he’s not being a bitch. We’re starting a new nation.”

“A new--” Tubbo turned his gaze back to the palace, then the structures he could see peeking out behind it. “. . . did you two make an entire fucking empire in one week?”

“Yup.” Tommy pushed himself to his feet and dusted dirt off his purple tunic, grinning.

“Welcome to the Principality of Prime, a neutral safe haven! No fighting allowed here, unless it’s for self-defense. Lemme show you around.”

**28.** *the adventures of dreaxter, pt. 2 (credit to curry\_powder)* ([see previous parts of this loop here](#))

“Where are we going?”

Sapnap didn’t look back. “Kinoko Kingdom,” he replied shortly. Tommy, trailing after him, made a face at his back.

“The fuck is a kincoco?” he asked.

“*Kinoko*, ” Sapnap corrected. “It’s an anime character.”

*“An anime character?”* Dream faked a confused look. *“Are they the ruler of the kingdom?”*

“I-- no. She’s mushroom-themed, though.”

*“Then why did you name it Kinoko Kingdom?”* They stepped through the nether portal and into the island nation. *“. . . Oh. It’s mushroom-themed too!”*

They entered the Kingdom with little fanfare. As they rounded one of the buildings, a man came into view, dressed in a multicolor hoodie.

“Karl!” Sapnap called. Karl jumped, snapping the book he was holding shut and stuffing it into his inventory.

“Sapnap! Don’t scare me like that!” He turned to the group. “What’s-- *Dream?!?*”

Dream waved. *“Hi, I’m Dreaxter!”*

Karl stared at him for a long moment. “You’re-- you’re a ghost.”

*“I am,”* Dream agreed.

Karl took a step back. “You’re *a ghost.*”

Dream nodded slowly. *“Yes, we just established that.”*

“You’re not supposed to be a ghost!” Karl protested, only to grimace and duck his head like he’d said something he wasn’t supposed to. “I-- sorry, nevermind. Just. How? How did you die?”

Dream fiddled with his ghostly fingers. *“It was cold,”* was all he said.

Tommy pushed his way to the front of the group. “We’re looking for Gogy,” he said. “Do you know where he is?”

Karl stared at him like he’d just noticed him. “Tommy? Why. . . why are you with Dream?”

“He’s nicer like this,” Tommy said. Because Dream was standing at the very back of the group, Karl was the only one that saw him flip Tommy off.

“R-right,” the man stammered. “Well, uh, I-- I think George’s in that house?” he pointed at a small mushroom-themed house down the street. “He was sleeping there a couple hours ago. I’m not sure if he already left.”

Sapnap snorted. “Probably not,” he said, voice tinged with bitterness. Karl took one look at his face and opened his arms. Sapnap shuffled forward, burying his face in Karl’s shoulder as the other man wrapped him in a hug.

Tommy and Dream glanced at each other before moving away, giving the two fiances some space.

“Talk about third-wheeling,” Tommy grumbled. Dream shrugged, slightly subdued.

*“Sapnap needs it,”* he said quietly. *“I . . . I didn’t think it would affect him this badly.”*

“Dude, you were his best friend.”

*“He promised he’d kill me if he ever saw me out of prison.”*

Tommy shot him an incredulous look. “That doesn’t mean he’d be *happy* to see you dead!”

Dream said nothing, instead watching as Karl muttered something inaudible in Sapnap’s ear.

Tommy sighed. “. . . How did you die, anyways?”

*“Bled out,”* Dream said dryly. *“Quackity didn’t bring enough regen potions to fix the damage.”*

Tommy paused. “He didn’t do that in loop zero.”

*“I may have intentionally tried to piss him off.”*

“What the fuck, Dream.”

*“Dreaxter.”*

“Shut the fuck up, bitch. I’ll call you whatever I want.” He hesitated. “. . . Are you okay?”

Dream grinned. *“No, but I will be after I glitter bomb Las Nevadas. Wanna help?”*

“Do you even need to ask?”

## 29. lava, pt. 3 ([see previous parts of this loop here](#))

“Give it to me, Tubbo,” Dream commanded.

That was his cue. Tommy charged into the ruined community house, grimacing as the water left his clothes sopping wet. “NO!” he shouted. “NO, NO, DON’T--”

“Tommy?!” Tubbo cried, turning to him. Tommy hastily downed a cup of milk, shuddering at the tingling sensation of the invisibility potion wearing off. “What-- what are you doing here?!”

“Tubbo,” he greeted, then turned to Dream. “. . . Dream.”

“Tommy,” Dream returned, his face hidden behind his mask. “Would you like to explain yourself?”

Tommy scowled. “I didn’t blow up the fucking community house,” he protested. “Does this look like something I would do?!”

“*Yes!*” Dream snapped. “Yes, it does. You burned down George’s house--”

“Everyone here has grieved before!”

“--you snuck in here when you were supposed to stay in exile, and then you blew up the community house!”

“You have no proof, bitch!”

“Your past is plenty of proof! Who else would do something like this?!”

There was a moment of tense silence. The two glared at each other, neither willing to back down.

Tommy drew himself to his full height. “Dream,” he said coldly. People leaned forward, waiting in gleeful or anticipative silence.

“... The floor is lava.”

“Prime fucking damnit,” Dream cursed, hastily hopping into the waterfall and paddling to keep himself afloat. “I knew you would do it, you little shit, I *knew*-- ”

Tommy flipped him off. “Shut the fuck up, you green bastard. This is payback for Technoblade’s house--”

“--need to keep you on your toes--”

“--that’s the lamest excuse I’ve heard in twenty years--”

“--not as lame as loop 317--”

“--you said we’d never speak of it again!”

“*You* said we wouldn’t,” Dream chirped, still treading water. “I never agreed.”

Tommy kicked him out of the waterfall.

### **30.** (*credit to LeyRei*)

“It’s so cursed,” Ranboo whispered, rocking back and forth. “So cursed. It’s cursed beyond human comprehension--”

“What’s so cursed?”

“Tubbo!” Ranboo wailed, leaping to his feet and grabbing him by the shoulders. “Thank Prime, you’re *normal!*”

Tubbo patted his hand. “Uh, yeah? Whaddya mean, ‘normal’?”

Ranboo shuddered, his eyes growing distant. “It’s so cursed,” he repeated.

“He’s freaking out for some reason,” someone grumbled. Tubbo whipped around, eyes widening.

“T-Tommy?”

“Hey, Tubbo,” Tommy greeted. “Can you get Ranboob to stop panicking?”

Ranboo whimpered and backed away, sinking to the ground and clapping his hands over his ears. “Make it stop,” he begged no one in particular.

“Why the fuck are you talking like that?” Tubbo asked blankly. “Why-- what the hell happened to your accent?”

Tommy scowled and crossed his arms. “You too?” he complained in a flawless American accent. “Everyone’s been saying some shit about that today. It’s fucking annoying.”

“Tommy!” The teen turned to see Dream hurrying up to him, looking harried. “Have you seen George? He ran away when I tried to talk to him.”

“I wonder why that is,” Tommy drawled.

“I-- what?” Dream seemed taken aback. Then he noticed the other two. “Why is Ranboo on the floor?”

“*Dream has a British accent,*” Ranboo hissed, wild-eyed. “*Whyyyyyyyyyy.*”

“He’s having a mental breakdown,” Tommy informed Dream. “Dunno why he’s so freaked out about our accents. And for your information, your Cockney accent is *shit*.”

“Not like your American accent is any better,” Dream jabbed back.

“For the record,” Tubbo put in, looking bewildered even as he dropped into an over-exaggerated Italian accent that sounded suspiciously like Mario, “both of your accents seem-a prrretty okay-a to me.”

Ranboo began to sob.

## Chapter End Notes

Please read the clarifications on the beginning notes if you haven’t already.

ALSO there is now a fic inspired by this one! It’s a really fun read, so go check it out :D

### **Loop Notes:**

**26.** “Tubbo, why are we missing twenty gold blocks?” “A piglin probably came through and stole them.” “. . . Tubbo, piglins live in the Nether.” “Yeah, so?” “I-- nevermind.”

“Kay, big Q! See ya later!”

- 27.** Tommy gets a therapy arc, one loop at a time.
- 28.** In retrospect, Karl was acting quite sus.
- 30.** This set off a series of server accent-swaps. British Dream was cursed, but nowhere near as cursed as British Mexican Dream.

# Chapter 7

## Chapter Notes

HELLO IT HAS BEEN A HOT MINUTE SINCE I'VE DONE SPOTLIGHTED COMMENTS SO HAVE A FEW

### Spotlighted Comments

**commiecricket:** oh no,,,,, adoption,,,,, the *horror*,,,,,

**SunGloow:** Oh you fool, all along Callahan HAS been in the loop!

**curry\_powder:** Blind yourself, have some glitter.

**beatriceplay:** british mexican dream..... why. wHy

**TheSnowyPlains:** \*slamming hands on table\* plot plot plot plot plot pLOT PLOT PL

**Gamergamer:** Bro Karl sus mega sus sussy baka-

**Atalante241:** British Mexican Dream my abhorred

And kudos to l1ght for translating the entire conversation in the first loop in Chapter 5.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

### 31. (*inspired by Purplewitchii*)

“Shit shit shit shit *shit*--”

“*What the fuck did you put in those potions?!*”

“I don’t-- I was just experimenting!”

“*Well your ‘experimenting’ fucked everything up. Fix it. Now.*”

“Dream, I need-- I need access to the drug van to do that.”

A pause on the other end of the call. Tommy glanced nervously at his communicator.

“*You need access to the drug van,*” Dream repeated. “*Could I steal the potion supplies and take them to you?*”

Tommy shook his head, then remembered that Dream couldn’t see him. “I-- no, Wilbur’ll ask questions. He’s already suspicious of me as it is, if you--”

A knock on the door cut him off.

“Oh shit,” he muttered, shoving the communicator under the pillow and scrambling to his feet.

“Dream?” Sapnap called. “You in there?”

“Uh--” Tommy cleared his throat, hurrying over to a chest and shoving the lid up. “Y-yeah! I’m getting my weapons.”

“Okay,” Sapnap said slowly. “. . . you sound kinda off, is everything okay?”

“Yeah, everything’s fine, big man.” Tommy realized his mistake a second too late.

“Big man?” Sapnap repeated. “. . . Dream, I’m coming in.”

“Uh-- no, you don’t--” but it was already too late. Sapnap shoved the door open.

He stared at Tommy. Tommy stared back, then grimaced and ducked his head like he’d seen Dream do several times.

“I might be picking up Tommy’s speech patterns,” he admitted.

Sapnap snorted. “Fraternizing with the enemy, Dream?”

“Hell no.” Tommy scowled. “I’m fine, see? Now get out of my house.”

Sapnap rolled his eyes, but obligingly turned and left. The moment he was gone, Tommy dove for the bed, yanking the communicator out from under his pillow.

“Shit that was close,” he hissed.

A loud huff. “*What materials do you need?*”

“Dream, we’ve been over this, you can’t steal stuff from the drug van.”

“*Watch me. What. Materials?*”

“. . . I actually don’t know.”

A pause. Then: “*WHAT?!?*”

Tommy winced and pulled the comm away from his ear. “I don’t know, okay?! I don’t remember what I put in the potions last night!”

“*So what you’re saying,*” Dream said slowly, “*is that you have no idea how to undo this.*”

“Pretty much, yeah.”

“*And we’re going to be stuck in each others’ bodies for the rest of this loop.*”

“Uh-huh.”

There was a long moment of silence.

“*Look at the window.*”



Tommy slowly turned around. His own face stared at him through the window, a communicator pressed to his ear.

*"I'm going to give you a fifteen minute head start, Tommy,"* Dream said.

"W-wait, Big D--"

Dream raised a gleaming netherite axe. *"Make that ten minutes."*

Tommy hung up, shoved whatever useful stuff he could find from the chests into his inventory, and *ran like hell*.

## 32.

"Hey, Dream. Here to wish me luck at the elections?"

"Hello," Dream greeted, then slammed a potion down at Tommy's feet. Tommy let out a startled shout and scrambled back, but it was already too late.

When the air cleared, a raccoon was left staring balefully at Dream. Dream shrugged.

"Nothing personal." He paused. "Okay, maybe a little personal. Never dye my hoodie pink again."

Tommy bared his teeth in a smug grin.

---

"Dream."

"Wilbur."

The L'Manbergian tilted his head. "To what do I owe the pleasure of this. . . visit?"

Dream shrugged. "I have an endorsement to make," he explained. And then he smashed a potion at Wilbur's feet.

"Fucker," Wilbur said. It came out as a loud *cluck*.

---

"--and then I'll announce that we're pooling our votes," Schlatt finished. He grinned lazily and held out a hand to Quackity. "Pleasure doing business with you, Quackity."

Quackity opened his mouth to reply, only to be interrupted by the sound of shattering glass. Schlatt jerked back, staring as his running-mate-to-be disappeared into a pile of clothes and fluffy feathers. More splash potions smashed to the ground behind him, and then he found himself blinking down at hooves. *His* hooves. Because he had turned into a ram.

“What the fuck,” he bleated.

The duck that had been Quackity let out an angry quack.

---

When it came time for speeches, a whole menagerie of animals migrated onto the stage and proceeded to cause chaos. Niki and Fundy somehow managed to reign them in, clearing the stage to make their own speeches to the confused populace. The other competitors never made an appearance.

Needless to say, Coconut 2020 won the elections by a landslide.

### 33. *(credit to anon and DeDoSzo)*

Sam stared at the scene. “What.”

Dream raised a hand in his general direction, not even looking up from his cards. Tommy, sitting cross-legged on the obsidian floor across from him, took another bite out of his potato. Ranboo, whose eyes were twin voids of chilling purple, let out a happy *vwroop*. He put down a card on top of the pile forming in the middle of the little circle.

Tommy slapped down a wildcard. “Yellow.”

Dream let out a slow, quiet chuckle. The two teenagers stared at him.

“No,” Tommy said, pointing at him with the half-finished potato. “No fuckin’ way, you cannot--”

Dream cackled and slammed down a yellow five. “Uno!”

“FUCK!” Tommy cursed. Ranboo just dropped his cards and put his head in his hands.

“ΔΕΙΤΕ ΜΗΔΕΝΑ ΤΗΝ ΕΛΠΙΔΑ ΣΤΟΝ ΚΟΣΜΟΝ ΤΗΣ ΓΑΛΛΙΑΣ?” He moaned.

“You have to be cheating somehow,” Tommy insisted. “That’s the fifth fuckin’ time you’ve won, you bitch, nobody is *that* lucky--”

“How the *hell* did you get in here?” Sam demanded.

Three blank gazes turned to him. “I 𐄂𐄃𐄄𐄅𐄆𐄇𐄈𐄉,” Ranboo offered.

“Ran, we’ve been over this,” Tommy said. “You gotta speak English. Otherwise they’re not gonna get it.”

“I 𐄂𐄃𐄄𐄅𐄆𐄇𐄈𐄉 i 𐄂𐄃𐄄𐄅𐄆𐄇𐄈𐄉 𐄂𐄃𐄄𐄅𐄆𐄇𐄈𐄉 𐄂𐄃𐄄𐄅𐄆𐄇𐄈𐄉 𐄂𐄃𐄄𐄅𐄆𐄇𐄈𐄉 𐄂𐄃𐄄𐄅𐄆𐄇𐄈𐄉 𐄂𐄃𐄄𐄅𐄆𐄇𐄈𐄉.”

“At least try, big man.”

All conversation abruptly ended when Sam drew his sword and pointed it at Tommy’s face. “How. Did you get in.”

Tommy looked him dead in the eye and took another bite of his potato. He then proceeded to chew for ten long seconds before he swallowed and said, “Magic.”

“That’s not an answer, Tommy.”

“Yes it is.” Tommy took another bite of his potato, then made a face. “Do you have any salt and butter? These potatoes are kinda bland.”

“Take this seriously.”

“I am.” Tommy turned away and put down a card on top of the pile that Ranboo and Dream had started, finishing off the last of his potato.

Sam took a deep breath. He wasn’t paid enough for this.

“Tommy,” he began, trying to keep his frustration in check, “If you could get in, then Dream might be able to get out. I need to know so I can improve the security in this prison.”

He was ignored. The three players had begun a rapid-fire round of Uno, ending with Dream slamming down a green three.

“UNO!”

“I 𐄂𐄃𐄄𐄅𐄆𐄇𐄈𐄉 i 𐄂𐄃𐄄𐄅𐄆𐄇𐄈𐄉 𐄂𐄃𐄄𐄅𐄆𐄇𐄈𐄉.”

Sam closed his eyes and resisted the urge to scream.

### 34. *(credit to Trytokillmeorsomething123)*

“TOMMY!” Tubbo screamed, shaking with terror. “TOMMY, ARE YOU OKAY?!”

“LET HIM GO,” Sam shouted. Dream just threw back his head and cackled.

“Let him go?” he mocked. The lit match in his hand lowered towards the TNT. Every person in the crowd below tensed further, eyes fixed on it. “Now why would I do that?”

“What do you want?” Sapnap demanded.

Dream tilted his head. “I told you,” he said calmly. “I want Tubbo and Ranboo to give themselves up and come with me peacefully.”

“They’re not going anywhere *near* you,” Quackity snapped, his wings bristling.

Dream hummed. His hand drifted an inch lower. “Is that so?”

“TOMMY!” Tubbo made to lunge forward, only to be wrestled backwards by Ranboo. “LET ME *GO*--”

“TUBBO, YOU BITCH, DON’T YOU DARE TAKE A FUCKING STEP CLOSER!” Tommy shrieked like the dramatic gremlin he was. He jerked wildly at the ropes binding him to the large stack of TNT. “I’M NOT WORTH IT!”

“Be quiet,” Dream snapped. He turned to look down at the crowd. “Well? What will it be? Tommy’s life, or your cooperation?”

“Neither,” Sam snarled. “You’re going back to prison.”

“I don’t think so,” Dream purred.

“Fuck you, you green bitch!” Tommy spat. “Blow me up, I dare you--”

Quackity started panicking. “Tommy, Tommy, shut the fuck up--”

Tommy just raised his voice. “YOU DON’T HAVE THE GUTS TO DO IT, DO YOU? STOP BEING SUCH A PUSSY AND *BLOW ME UP ALREADY*-- ”

“FINE!” Dream shouted, clearly annoyed. He moved as though to drop the match.

“NO, NO, WAIT!” Quackity shouted. “WAIT, DREAM, WE’LL LET YOU GO!”

Dream paused, turning to look down at him.

Quackity gritted his teeth. “Let Tommy go, and we’ll let you go.”

Dream laughed sardonically. “How stupid do you think I am? If I let him go, you’ll just swarm me.” He turned back to Tommy. “I’ll settle for revenge.”

He dropped the match.

“*TOMMY!*” Tubbo screamed. Ranboo, whose grip had loosened in shock, didn’t react in time to stop him from sprinting forwards. Sam, however, did, stepping bodily in the way and trapping Tubbo in a clinch. Tubbo thrashed, trying to get free, but Sam just pushed his head down, keeping him from seeing the scene. Dream, laughing maniacally in the background, was drowned out seconds later by a series of explosions.

Several people flinched as a gritty substance spattered over them, not daring to look up. Tubbo wailed and beat at Sam, kicking in a desperate attempt to free himself. When his blurry gaze refocused, however, he froze.

“Uh,” he croaked, staring at Sam’s glitter-covered armor.

Sam grimaced and cracked his own eyes open, expecting a grisly scene. Instead, he was met with the sight of glitter.

He looked up. Yep, that was glitter. Everywhere.

Hysterical cackling caught his attention. He turned to stare at Tommy, who was still wrapped in the mangled remains of the rope. He was covered in a thick layer of glitter, hair sticking in one direction as though it had been run through with a strong wind.

Most importantly, he was alive. Alive, and unharmed.

“TOMMY!” Tubbo cried. He elbowed his way out of Sam’s arms and hurled an ender pearl up to the roof. The moment he reached his friend, he tackled him in a hug, uncaring of the glitter getting all over him. “You’re-- you’re okay!”

Tommy patted Tubbo on the back. “Yep. They were glitter bombs.”

There was an alarmed cry from below. “Where’d Dream go?” Quackity demanded. “Did anyone see where he--”

A series of explosions went off. Tubbo screamed, shrinking back from the edge of the roof as the area below was buried in clouds of glitter.

“. . . Where the fuck did you get that much glitter?” Tommy hissed. His voice was barely audible under the chaos ensuing below.

Dream, standing invisible beside him, grinned. “I have my sources.”

### **35. the adventures of dreaxter, pt. 3 ([see previous parts of this loop here](#))**

“Dream,” George whispered.

*“You look like you’ve seen a ghost,” Dreaxter noted. Tommy choked on air. “And hi! I’m Dreaxter!”*

“You’re--” George shook himself. “You’re *dead?*”

“Yes,” Dreaxter said. *“Why does everyone ask me that?”*

“But-- you’re supposed to be in prison,” George protested weakly, sinking towards the floor.

“You were-- safe in prison. I don’t-- I don’t understand-- who killed you? How--?”

Dream tilted his head. *“Prison? Oh, is that the big blackstone building I woke up in?”*

“Yeah,” Tommy cut in. “That’s the prison.”

Dreaxter hummed, brow furrowing. *“I don’t think Dream was very safe there,”* was all he said. *“There was a lot of blood.”*

George paled further and sank the remaining few inches to the floor.

“Okay, that’s it,” Sapnap growled. He turned on his heel and stormed towards the door.

“Woah woah woah, big man,” Tommy said, sliding in front of him. “Where are you going?”

“To find answers,” Sapnap snapped. “Get out of my way.”

“Wait,” George blurted. He scrambled to his feet. “Wait, I’m coming with you.”

Dreaxter tilted his head. *“What’s happening?”*

“We’re going to find out what happened to you,” Sapnap promised.

Dreaxter blinked. “. . . *Why?*”

His former friend stared at him for a long moment, then gritted his teeth and turned away. He shoved past Tommy and out of the house. George followed. The door slammed shut behind them.

“. . . Are you siccing Sapnap on Quackity and Sam?” Tommy asked.

*“Maybe,”* Dreaxter admitted. *“I might be a bit salty that nobody ever found out what happened to me in the prison.”*

“Right, like you *might* hold a *bit* of a grudge against Quackity.”

*“Exactly.”*

## Chapter End Notes

if I missed you in the credits for a certain loop idea please let me know I'm sleep deprived and I might have missed someone

### **Loop Notes**

**31.** The impromptu manhunt eventually ended when the others got involved. Or more accurately, it became a hunt-- with the rest of the server running from the two insane crime boys armed with glitter bombs. Switching bodies doesn't affect their propensity to weaponize glitter, after all.

**32.** Despite the fact that Fundy and Niki mostly ran as a joke, they were good leaders.

L'Manberg flourished under their guidance, and Tommy began considering endorsing Coconut 2020 in future loops.

# Chapter 8

## Chapter Notes

\*slams hands on table\* ImmortalCloud/pottedcacti DREW [FANART](#) FOR THE COSPLAY LOOP AND I'M SCREAMING

### **Spotlighted Comments**

**curry\_powder:** Roses are red / Sam wants to go / I think we can see / Dream cheats at uno

**angelofminecraft:** COCONUT 2020 MY BELOVEDS!!!! YOU ARE FINALLY GETTING A CHANCE TO RULE!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

### **36. (*inspired by Avendrial*)**

“What the fuck,” Tommy deadpanned.

Dream shrugged. “It ups my intimidation factor.”

“*What the fuck.* That’s-- *no.* They’re so thick what the *fuck--*”

“Deal with it.”

---

“Dream, have you-- *ohhhhhkay.* I’m just gonna--” Sapnap looked away for a moment and took a deep breath.

Dream crossed his arms. “What? What’s wrong?”

“You--” Sapnap gestured, still not looking directly at him. “You have eyebrows. Okay. That’s. Okay.”

“Sapnap,” Dream said slowly, “I’ve always had eyebrows.”

“Not you, your-- your mask.” Sapnap grimaced and chanced a glance, then cringed and looked away again. “Yeah, no-- I can’t look at them. Are they-- are they *fuzzy?*”

“Yeah, and stick-on. I got them at a crafts store.”



Sapnap let out a hissing sigh. “I-- okay. Please. Please take them off. I can’t-- I can’t look at you when you have them on.”

“They’re not *that* bad,” Dream muttered.

“Yes, yes they really are.”

---

George took one look at him, screamed, and threw his half-finished sandwich at Dream’s face. Then he turned tail and booked it.

Dream stared after him, the sandwich sliding down his mask. “Seriously, they’re not that bad!”

---

“What are you-- are you *praying*?”

Fundy didn’t appear to hear him, hands clasped in prayer as a deluge of *Hail Primes* spilled past his lips. His eyes were squeezed shut like he was trying to block out a nightmare.

“I’m telling you,” Tommy deadpanned. “The brows don’t work. Just. Please. Remove them.”

“. . . I can’t,” Dream admitted. “I superglued them to my mask because they kept falling off.”

Tommy’s head snapped towards him. “You-- why the fuck didn’t you just use regular glue?”

“Couldn’t find any.”

### **37.** (*credit to akailana*)

“We’re taking a break this loop.”

Tommy squinted at him from across the room. “What, we’re just gonna stay in the cell?”

“No, we’re running away.”

A pause. “Uh. To where?”

Dream shrugged. “Anywhere away from civilization,” he said. “We can start a cottagecore arc or something.”

A pause. “Cottagecore arc?”

“You know, where people--”

“I know what cottagecore is, Dream, I don’t live under a rock.”

Dream glanced at the obsidian over their head. “Well, technically--”

“I don’t live here, you homeless bastard.” Tommy paused. “Oh wait, you’re not homeless anymore, are you? You got a nice house made of blackstone--”

Dream rolled his eyes. “*Anyways*, I was thinking we could build a nice little place away from everyone else and just relax. Thoughts?”

Tommy shrugged. “Sounds good, big man. Been needing a break anyway. How hard can cottagecore shit be?”

---

“DREAM, THE CHICKEN COOP’S ON FIRE!”

“*AGAIN?! I’VE ALREADY PUT IT OUT THREE TIMES IN THE PAST HOUR! WHAT THE FUCK ARE YOU DOING WITH IT?!’*”

“I’M TRYING TO BUILD A NETHER PORTAL--”

“THIS IS SUPPOSED TO BE OUR COTTAGECORE ARC, TOMMY. WE’RE NOT GOING TO THE NETHER.”

“BUT DREAM--”

“*NO. PUT THE FLINT AND STEEL DOWN, TOMMY--*”

“OH FUCK THE CHICKENS ARE ON FIRE!”

“*TOMMY!’*”

---

“Um. This isn’t. Ideal.”

“It’s fucking pathetic, that’s what it is.”

Dream poked one of the wilted sprouts with his foot. “Looks like we’ll have to raid the village again. Hope they’ve managed to regrow some of their food by now.”

“I’m telling you,” Tommy muttered, “Jeremy’s gonna be the death of us.”

“Jeremy?”

“That one villager we stole from like a week ago. Y’know, the one that never stops glaring at us?”

Dream paused. “Why would you name him *Jeremy*?”

Tommy scoffed. “It’s a pog name. And I’m not getting killed by a *nameless* villager.”

“I’d rather not get killed by a villager at all.”

---

Tommy stared at the pathetic excuse of a sweater in Dream’s hands and promptly burst into laughter.

Dream threw the sweater at his head. It missed, got caught on an uneven brick in the wall, and unraveled into a clump of yarn. “Shut up!”

“You can make *netherite armor*,” Tommy wheezed, “but you can’t knit a fucking *sweater*?”

“Like you can do any better,” Dream shot back. “I would also like to remind you that I’m holding two very sharp knitting needles.”

Tommy abruptly stopped laughing.

---

“Please for the love of Prime just throw me back into the Vault. Or kill me. Either one is preferable at this point.”

Sapnap narrowed his eyes at him, tightening his grip on the sword leveled at Dream’s face. “Why?”

Dream stared at him. His hair was a rat’s nest and his clothes were tattered and singed at the edges. Dark bags hung under his eyes. His face was backlit with firelight from the burning house behind him. “. . . This disaster of a cottagecore arc convinced me that freedom isn’t worth it.”

“Hey Dream, I found a watermelon!” Sapnap’s head snapped towards Tommy, who was stumbling barefoot out of the woods, a watermelon in his arms. He stopped when he caught sight of the cottage. “Why the hell is the house on fire?!”

“I tried to bake muffins,” Dream said, in the most defeated voice possible. “I did not know that flour exploded when in contact with fire.”

Tommy eyed the bonfire for a moment, then shrugged. “Well, shit was ugly anyways. Told you we should’ve used more cobblestone.”

Dream put his head in his hands.

**38.** *the adventures of dreaxter, pt. 4* ([see previous parts of this loop here](#))

“Niki!”

Niki Nihachu stopped in her tracks, but didn’t turn around. “Tommy,” she greeted stiffly.

“Hey, Niki,” Tommy said. He paused for a moment. “Uh. . . how you doin’?”

“Good,” the woman replied shortly. She turned around to look at him. “Why are you talking to me, Tommy?”

Tommy looked taken aback. “Uh. . . I guess, I guess I wanted to ask you something?”

A long moment of silence. “Well?” Niki asked. She wouldn’t have been this short with him normally, but her failed attempt on his life had been weighing on her for a while now. “What is it?”

Tommy grimaced. “Uh, Dreaxter!”

A glowing ghost popped his head out from behind a building. “*Hi,*” he said.

Niki stared at him. “*Dream?*”

“*No, I’m Dreaxter,*” Dream corrected. “*You’re Niki, right?*”

“I-- yes,” Niki confirmed, still staring at him. “You’re a ghost. How did-- how did you die?”

Dreaxter shrugged. “*Don’t remember. Sapnap’s trying to figure it out.*”

“Anyways,” Tommy cut in, “Dream-- sorry, *Dreaxter*-- wanted to meet you.”

“*You bake, right?*” Dreaxter asked cheerily.

Niki bit her lip. “I. . . I haven’t baked in a while. . .”

Dreaxter shrugged. “*But you used to?*”

“Yes?”

The ghost shuffled his nonexistent feet. “. . . *could you teach me?*”

Niki blinked. "Why?"

*"It's a . . . personal mission, I guess," Dreaxter explained. "I don't really remember what happened, but I heard that Dream was a--"*

"Bitch," Tommy chirped.

*"--bad person," Dreaxter continued without missing a beat. "He hurt a lot of people, and, um, I guess I wanted to make up for it? And, and people like gifts, right? I think if. . . I know cupcakes won't make up for what Dream did, but. . ."*

Niki hesitated, gaze darting between Tommy and the ghost. "I . . ."

*"Please?" Dreaxter drifted closer. "I really wanna learn!"*

"Laying it on a bit thick there, big man," Tommy muttered. He pulled his communicator out of his pocket and checked the time. "Oh shit, gotta go. I promised Tubbo I'd do this thing for him."

It was a complete lie - he hadn't talked to Tubbo in two days now - but he'd discovered a few hundred loops prior that Nikki didn't exactly have a *positive* opinion of him at the moment. She'd probably be more amenable to teaching Dream if Tommy wasn't hovering behind him. That being said, Dream had wanted to try baking for several loops now. Problem was, the only person on the server that could bake something decent was Niki, and during most loops he never got a chance to ask her. Sometimes, he couldn't get into Manburg; sometimes, he was a criminal on the run; sometimes, Niki hated his guts.

Now, though, Manburg was gone. He was a ghost; the server wouldn't try to throw him back into prison, and Niki would believe she had no real reason to hate him. Being dead also gave him a plausible explanation for an action that would have been viewed with suspicion had he still been alive.

Niki stared at him. Dream kept an earnest expression on his face, which wasn't very difficult considering that he *genuinely* wanted to learn.

It paid off. ". . . Alright," Niki acquiesced at last, turning away. "I'll just. . . we can use my kitchen, I suppose. Just give me a moment to gather my supplies."

*"Yes!" Dreaxter cheered, doing a flip midair. "Thank you!"*

---

"Careful," Niki warned. Dreaxter narrowed his eyes, struggling to pour the vanilla extract into the spoon. His focus slipped for a moment and his hands became halfway incorporeal, the extract splashing onto the floor.

*"Sorry."*

“No, no, it’s fine,” Niki assured. “Making messes is a part of the baking process. Did you get it?”

“*Yeah.*” Dream held up the teaspoon of vanilla extract. “*Do I just. . . pour it in?*”

“You got it.”

Dream tipped the vanilla extract into the bowl. “*Okay, now what?*”

“Well, now you have to mix it. . .”

---

“*Um,*” Dreaxter said, staring at the sink. “*I-- I can’t wash my hands. The water makes them melt.*”

Niki paused, then grabbed a towel off a nearby rack and handed it to him. “Wipe your hands with this.”

Dream obediently cleaned his hands with the towel. It got most of the cocoa powder and flour off. The vegetable oil, however, remained. The ghost stared at his hands for a long moment, then frowned and flexed his fingers. The oily sheen appeared to collapse in on itself as he went incorporeal, any substance on his ectoplasmic skin falling through him.

Niki stared at him for a long moment. “That’s. . . one way of doing it, I guess. Does it clean the germs off too?”

“*I think so,*” Dream replied truthfully. Niki offered him a small smile.

“Then it works. Come on, let’s put these in the oven.”

---

“Okay, now that they’re baking, let’s get started on the frosting.”

“*Frosting?*”

“Frosting,” Niki confirmed. “Could you go grab five eggs?”

“*Okay!*” Dreaxter stuck his hand through the chest lid, paused, withdrew it, and opened the chest like a normal human being. “*Right, um, five eggs.*”

He toted the eggs back over to Niki, carefully setting them down on a table. “*Now what?*”

“Now, we separate the yolk and the white.”

“*Okay*,” Dreaxter said. “*How?*”

Niki took an egg and demonstrated. Dream took an egg and tried to copy her. It broke on the kitchen floor. A chicken sprung up, squawked at them, and promptly began pecking at Niki’s ankles.

Dream sighed.

---

“Squeeze it carefully-- yes, exactly like that, you’re doing great! Okay, now turn the base-- gently, *gently*--”

Dreaxter raised the piping bag and looked at the lopsided dollop of frosting on his cupcake. “*How do you make it look so nice?*”

“Practice makes perfect,” Niki replied, setting her own perfectly-frosted cupcake aside. The chicken, which had been named Marshmallow, clucked from inside her cage and tried to peck at the pastry. “And you’re doing really good for your first time!”

Dreaxter beamed at her. Niki smiled back, then turned to the rest of the unfrosted cupcakes.

“Let’s frost the rest of these. I’ll do half, and you’ll do half?”

“*Okay!*”

---

“Do you want to add anything on top?”

“*On top?*”

“On top of the frosting.” Niki gestured to the array of jars sitting on the table. “I have chocolate chips, rainbow sprinkles, edible glitter. . .”

Dreaxter’s head snapped towards her. “*Edible glitter?*”

Niki giggled and slid a jar of silver glitter towards him. “Edible glitter,” she confirmed.

Dreaxter *smiled*.

---

---

*"I'm really sorry about the mess,"* Dreaxter apologized again as he dumped the dirty towel into the sink. Marshmallow, who had been moved into a pen in the corner, was now happily pecking away at some seeds. She looked up as Dreaxter passed by.

Niki waved him off. "Really, it's fine! I nearly set my kitchen on fire the first time I tried baking. Besides, you helped me clean up."

Dreaxter nodded hesitantly, then turned to the cupcakes. They sat on the counter in individual plastic boxes, ready to be delivered.

*"Thank you for teaching me,"* he said. *"I know you probably don't like Dream, but you did this anyway."*

"I don't like Dream, but. . . you're not him," Niki admitted quietly. "And honestly, I haven't had that much fun in a while. So thank *you* as well."

Dream beamed, then shuffled over to the counter and selected one of the prettier cupcakes he had frosted. Unlike the rest, it only had a light dusting of edible glitter on top. *"Here,"* he chirped, turning back to her and holding it out. *"This one's for you."*

Niki laughed. "What, as a 'sorry Dream was mean to you' cupcake?"

*"As a 'thank you for being my friend' cupcake,"* Dreaxter replied firmly.

Niki paused. "Friend?"

Dreaxter shrugged. *"Friend, baking buddy. . ."*

Niki giggled. "Baking buddy?"

*"Yeah, we can be baking buddies! I wanna do this again sometime,"* the ghost admitted. *"If. . . if that's okay."*

Niki's giggling softened into a smile. She dipped her head. "Of course. If you ever want to bake with me, just come find me, okay?"

*"Okay!"*

---

*"Tommy, I made you a cupcake!"*

Tommy turned around and caught the projectile hurtling towards his face out of reflex. He stared down at the plastic box, and the abomination inside of it.



Dream had dumped a frankly obscene amount of edible glitter into the frosting. The cupcake was less cake and more sugar. Tommy stared at it for a long moment, then looked up at Dream. “. . . Thanks, big man.”

“*You’re welcome!*” Dream chirped. “*Don’t worry, the glitter’s edible.*”

Tommy’s eyes widened. “It’s *edible*? Dream--”

“*I know,*” the ghost replied, a vicious grin spreading across his face. “*Time to think up some new pranks. We’ve got a casino owner to troll.*”

### 39. *toddler tales, pt. 1*

“You,” Dream said flatly, “are not allowed near a brewing stand ever again.”

“Well, how was I supposed to know that it’d do this?!” Tommy protested, chubby cheeks puffing with irritation. He waved his arm, effectively slapping Dream in the face with his now oversized sleeve. Dream scowled and tried to waddle forwards, only to discover that walking in shoes ten sizes too big was Very Difficult.

“This is all your fault,” he huffed instead. “For the record, throwing half-finished splash potions at people--”

“You startled me!”

“--isn’t a good defense reflex. And learn better observational skills, Tommy.”

“Shut up, you--”

The door opened. Dream and Tommy turned to see Technoblade staring down at them.

“Oh shit,” Tommy said.

Dream did the only thing he could think of. “Woah, mister!” he chirped. “Your hair is pretty!”

Technoblade stepped back out and shut the door.

“Rude.”

---

“Okay,” Technoblade hissed to himself. “Okay. There are two small children in my house. The small children are mortal enemies who probably have no idea who anybody on this server is. This is fine. I definitely have experience takin’ care of small children-- shut up, Chat.”

He took a deep, fortifying breath. He could do this. He *could*. He was Technoblade, a man feared for his battle prowess and terrifying determination. Once he set his mind to anything, he would do it-- come hell or high water.

He opened the door again, and was promptly attacked by a toddler wielding a stick.

Technoblade's first instinct was to kick said toddler away. Unfortunately, he could imagine the consequences of such an action, and thus wasted precious time restraining himself from carrying it out. Consequently, the toddler got him in the knees. He crumpled to the floor, where the other toddler began beating him over the head with his tiny fists.

Okay. This was fine. The mighty Blood God felled by two children.

L, said Chat. Technoblade decided that Chat could shut up.

Reaching up, he grabbed Dream's wrists, trying to save his skull from more battering. Then he straightened and gently pushed Tommy away, reaching out and snatching the stick from his grasp. Tommy screeched like an offended pelican and went for his throat.

"No," Technoblade said.

"I DON'T LISTEN TO KIDNAPPERS!" Tommy screamed, having discovered that Technoblade's throat was too high to reach. He settled for punching Technoblade in the stomach instead.

*BabyInnit used punch! Chat sang. It was super effective!*

Technoblade could feel a headache building. "No," he repeated, this time to both the toddlers and his Chat.

"Leggo!" Dream screeched, kicking Technoblade in the shin. "Leggo, you dirty kidnapper!"

"I'm not a kidnapper," Technoblade protested, releasing his grip on Dream's wrists. The toddler immediately began to batter his leg. "I didn't kidnap you."

"Liar!" Tommy shouted. "Where's Wilby?! I want Wilby!"

"Look, Tommy, Dream--"

"HOW THE FUCK DO YOU KNOW MY NAME?!"

The headache was reaching migraine levels. "Listen, the two of you are in the future."

That shut them up. "The future?" Dream whispered, fist drawn back to punch Technoblade in the leg again.

"The future," Technoblade confirmed.

"You're lying," Tommy accused. "That sounds like something a kidnapper would say."

In *what universe* would a kidnapper come up with something as ridiculous as ‘you’re in the future’? Technoblade shelved that question for another time. “Look, there’s gotta be some way to prove it to you.”

Tommy stared at him for a long moment. Then: “Where’s Tubbo?”

“What?”

Tommy scowled. “If we’re in the future, then Tubbo’ll be all grown up,” he said. “I wanna see Tubbo.”

“I wanna see Sapnap!” Dream piped. “Is he here?”

Oh. Oh no.

“Uh,” Technoblade said, sweating nervously. “Tubbo and Sapnap are. . . very far away from here. It’ll take a while to get them.”

Both children crossed their arms. “I can wait,” they chorused in unison.

This was a very bad idea. “That’s. . . uh. . . Tommy, Dream. . . they. . . Tubbo and Sapnap aren’t, um, friends with you anymore.”

There was a moment of silence. And then: “What?”

Tommy’s lower lip began to tremble, eyes growing watery. Next to him, Dream scowled, looking ready to throw a tantrum. Technoblade hastily backpedaled. “Uh, I, I mean, of course you can meet them! I’m sure they’ll be really happy to see you because you’re definitely still friends-- please for the love of Prime *don’t cry*.”

Tommy’s tears receded into his head so quickly that Technoblade nearly got whiplash. “YES!” he whooped, hopping victoriously only to trip over the hem of his oversized shirt-- which was basically a dress on him. Technoblade caught him before he could faceplant.

“. . . Why don’t we get you some fittin’ clothes first?”

#### **40.** (*inspired by Multi\_fandom\_dump*)

“Dream has sent us a declaration of war,” Wilbur said solemnly. He raised the book. “Let’s take a look at it, shall we?”

“A declaration of *war*? ” Fundy demanded. In answer, Wilbur just turned the book so the fox hybrid could see the cover. *Declaration of War* was stamped into the leather surface with fancy gold script.

Tubbo let out a nervous laugh. “Wow. He’s. . . really not happy that we’re doing this.”

“‘Really not happy’ is an understatement,” Eret said dryly.

Wilbur squared his shoulders. Everyone tensed as he opened the book-- and was promptly shot in the face with silly string.

Silence descended in the camarvan. Wilbur slowly reached up and wiped some silly string off his cheek.

“To the nation of L’Manberg,” he read aloud, “We understand your demand for independence. However, you have not proved yourself worthy of it. As such, we require you to prove yourself: hold your own against us for a month’s time, and we will grant you freedom.” He paused, scanning the next line. “. . . On this day we declare: let the prank war commence. The only rule is that neither side may harm or kill the other. Signed: Punz, Sapnap, George, and Dream.”

Tubbo blinked slowly. “They’re-- they’re declaring a prank war on us. They attacked Wilbur with silly string. What the fuck.”

Tommy broke out into evil cackling. “Oh, they’re going *down*.”

“Wait, wait, wait--” Fundy protested, “We’re not-- are we seriously going along with them?”

“I don’t see why not,” Wilbur said, shutting the book and picking some silly string from his hair. His smile was just a tad vicious. “You like pranks right, Fundy?”

Fundy looked conflicted. “Well I-- yeah, but. . .”

“You’re just mad that they got you first,” Tommy deadpanned. Wilbur shrugged.

“Maybe,” he admitted, “but this seems fun. Why not give it a try?”

Tubbo glanced at Tommy. “I’m on board,” he said.

“Definitely on board,” Tommy declared. “Fuckers won’t know what hit them.”

Fundy hesitated, then shrugged. “Fuck it. Sure.”

Eret shifted on his feet. “I have a couple of ideas,” he offered. Wilbur grinned.

“Then we’re in agreement. Gentlemen, prepare for war.”

## Chapter End Notes

Technoblade is so fun to write hsdhfkdsjfkds  
Also we got another inspired fic! Go check it out :D

### **Loop Notes**

**36.** The war for independence was paused because nobody, not even his friends, could look Dream in the face. Tommy rallied everyone on the server to hunt down Dream,

steal his mask, and burn it. It was a rather hectic day.

**37.** Nobody said cottagecore arcs were *easy*.

**40.** Neither side really *won*, but L'Manburg successfully impressed Dream enough that he let them have their independence. Seriously, where had Eret gotten four hundred and twenty whoopee cushions?

# Chapter 9

## Chapter Notes

Nothing I put here will be enough, so I'll keep it short:  
Wishing Technoblade luck. Hashtags don't work here, but #technosupport.  
**TW: 45. CONTAINS TORTURE AND DROWNING.**

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

### 41. adoption arc, pt. 3 ([see previous parts of this loop here](#))

"Thanks," Purpled muttered as Dream dumped another stack of concrete into the chest. He ran a hand over the blueprints laid out before him. "I think that's enough."

Dream dusted off his hands, then leaned back and stretched, spine cracking. Purpled wrinkled his nose.

"I'm going to have so many posture problems when I'm older," Dream muttered. He leaned over to peer at the blueprints. "Is that everything?"

"No. I still need lime stained glass." Purpled stalked over to another chest and yanked it open, rummaging through its contents. "I don't have enough dye."

"Then I'll help you get some."

Purpled paused, then straightened and turned to him. "Okay, for real. Why are you doing this?"

Dream blinked at him. "I told you, I wanted to get to know the people on my server better."

"You don't get anything from that," Purpled insisted. "People only ever help me because they want something. So what do you want? A favor? Someone dead?"

"Friendship," Dream replied. "I'm not going to ask you to kill someone, Purpled. I invited you to my server so you could meet the others and have fun."

Purpled laughed. "Yeah, right. I'll ask again: what do you want?"

Dream reached up and pushed his mask to one side of his head so Purpled could see his face. "And I'll say it again. Friendship."

Purpled stared at him. "You're being serious."

“I’m being serious,” Dream confirmed. “I know you fought in the underground Hypixel rings. You were one of the best. If you wanted to fight, you would have ignored my invite and stayed where you were. But you accepted. You came to this server for peace, and that’s exactly what you’re gonna get.”

Purpled watched him for a long moment. “I don’t trust you.”

“Understandable,” Dream agreed casually. “Guess I’ll have to work for that.”

Purpled huffed out something close to a laugh. “Guess you will,” he drawled, turning away. “. . . And you can start by helping me gather some green dye.”

Dream grinned. “On it.”

#### 42. *toddler tales, pt. 2* ([see previous parts of this loop here](#))

“Phil!” Technoblade hissed, pounding on the door. “Phil, open up, it’s me!”

“You’re gonna drop me,” one of the toddlers tucked under his arm complained.

“Why are you whispering?” the other asked curiously.

“Shhhhhh, we’re in *enemy territory*. ”

A scoff. “Then why the fuck are we sneaking around?” Tommy demanded, trying to wriggle out of Technoblade’s grasp. Technoblade was forced to grab him with his free arm, an act that was somewhat difficult due to the fact that he couldn’t see either of the children. He’d hit them all with a splash potion of invisibility before they’d entered L’Manberg borders; he wasn’t about to pick a fight with two children in his temporary custody - even if the two children happened to be his current semi-mortal enemy/ally (who he still owed that favor) and a gremlin he’d caught hiding in his basement.

Despite what he had said, he actually had no plans to return Tommy and Dream to L’Manberg. Or even expose their condition, for that matter. Given L’Manberg’s track record, he was pretty confident in the assumption that they would rather commit child murder than risk the two returning to their normal ages-- Dream especially.

But he was also aware that he absolutely *sucked* at caring for children. Which was why he was sneaking into L’Manberg to get Philza Minecraft, the man notorious for his chronic adoption problem. He was pretty sure Philza had actually *been* Tommy’s adoptive father for some period of time, though Wilbur had been the one to find him. What he *wasn’t* sure about, however, was if Tommy remembered Philza. Hopefully he did-- it would make Technoblade’s life easier.

Tommy squirmed in his grasp. “LEGGO!” he screeched, and Technoblade silently prayed that nobody had heard him.

The door flew open. The retired Angel of Death scanned the area, a sword in his hand. The light on the monitor cuff clapped around his ankle glowed red.

“Oh thank Prime-- *Phil*, It's Techno. I'm invis right now.”

Philza blinked but gave no other outward reaction that he had heard him. Casually, he stepped out onto his balcony, scanning the area like he had seen something strange-- leaving the doorway wide open. Technoblade took the opportunity to slip into the house.

As soon as he was in, Philza turned on his heel and reentered the house. He shut and dead-bolted the door behind him, then scanned the room. “Techno? Do you need some milk?”

“I got it,” Technoblade grunted. “The potion will wear off soon anyways. I actually came here because I had a problem.”

Philza turned towards the direction of his voice. “What kind of problem?”

“Mister Minecraft?” A high-pitched voice piped up.

Well. There was the answer to Technoblade's question. Tommy remembered Philza.

Philza, for his part, physically recoiled. His wings bristled and pulled tight against his body. When he spoke, his voice cracked. “*Tommy?*”

“And Dream!” Dream piped up. Philza paled. Technoblade stepped in before the situation could spiral.

“Potion mishap. Tommy and Dream got turned into kids,” he explained. The invisibility potion was starting to wear off, and Philza could now see the faded forms of two children under each of his arms. “I have absolutely no experience in carin' for kids. Was hopin' you'd be able to help.”

Philza stared at them, mouth opening and closing soundlessly. Tommy, on the other hand, was never at a loss for words.

“You said we were in tha' future!” he wriggled, forcing Technoblade to set him down or risk dropping him. The man hastily grabbed the back of the toddler's shirt before he could run. “Liar!”

“Liar!” Dream echoed, which was a whole new category of bizarre. Since *when* did Dream follow Tommy's lead?

“You two are technically in the future from your perspective,” Technoblade deadpanned. “I wasn't lyin'.”

Dream blinked. “What's per- pre-- prospeckive?”

“Perspective. Uhhh, means, how you see the world, basically.”

“Oh. Whas' 'bay-sick-lee'?”



“Okay,” Philza interrupted, having managed to compose himself enough that his outward shock had downgraded into internal screaming. He waved towards a doorway, through which a bed and several chests were visible. “Uh, kids, why don’t-- why don’t you go play in the bedroom?”

Tommy crossed his arms. “Dun’ wanna.”

Philza tried for a smile. “Please?”

Tommy stared at him for a moment. Then: “Do you know the kidnapper?”

Philza’s smile became more strained. “Yeah. His name’s Technoblade. He’s a friend.”

“A friend,” Tommy repeated dubiously. Dream sidled up to him.

“Do you trust him?” he whispered not-so-quietly.

“He’s Wilby’s dad,” Tommy whispered not-so-quietly back. “I think I do.”

Dream glanced between Tommy and Philza. “Okay,” he said with the dignity and self-importance of a three-year-old child. “We’ll go to the room.”

Tommy jabbed a chubby finger at Technoblade, eyes narrowed. “Don’t trust you,” he declared, then slowly backed into the bedroom, keeping his gaze trained on the piglin hybrid. Dream hurried after him, glancing uncertainly back at the two adults.

“Close the door, Tommy!” Philza called.

“Okay, Mister Minecraft!” Tommy sent one last suspicious glare at Technoblade, pointing two fingers at his eyes before directing them at the piglin hybrid in a ‘I’m watching you’ gesture.

The door shut. Philza stared at it for a moment, then turned to Technoblade.

“What the fuck, mate.”

“Phil, please,” Technoblade begged. “You gotta help me-- I don’t know what to do.”

Philza took a deep breath, then crossed his arms. “Okay, why don’t you tell me what happened?”

“Long story short, Tommy’s been hiding in my house from Dream. I left for a while to hunt, but Dream must’ve come by while I was out. Came back to find two toddlers next to my brewin’ stand. I’m guessin’ that Tommy was brewin’ somethin’ when Dream found him, so he threw a half-finished potion at Dream and--” he gestured at the bedroom door. “They don’t have their adult memories either. Tommy seems to recognize you, though-- didn’t you adopt him?”

Philza looked troubled. “He didn’t start calling me ‘dad’ until he was five,” he said. “Wilbur found him by himself in a park. He kept insisting that his parents would come back for him,

but. . .”

“But they never did.”

“Yeah. He saw Wilbur as an older brother, but he saw me as ‘Mister Minecraft’, Wilbur’s dad-- not his own.”

They both looked up at a crash, followed by muffled yelling through the bedroom door. “You boys okay?” Philza called.

Both children paused in their argument. “Dream’s cheating!” Tommy whined.

“Am not!” Dream protested hotly. The shouting resumed.

“They’re fine,” Philza huffed, a bittersweet but fond smile on his face. “. . . it’s been a while since I’ve seen Tommy like this. How old are they?”

“Somewhere between one and fifteen,” Technoblade deadpanned. “I was hopin’ you could narrow it down for me.”

Phil laughed. “I’d say they’re about two or three. I’m not sure why Dream’s the same age as Tommy, given how I’d expect the potion to work, but. . .”

“He probably got hit with more of it.”

Another crash. More muffled yelling, peppered with the occasional swear word. Technoblade sighed. “Phil, they wanna see their ‘friends’.”

Philza’s wings shuffled uneasily. “. . . That probably wouldn’t go well.”

“Exactly,” Technoblade groaned. “Please, Phil. You gotta help.”

Philza snorted. “Mate I’d be happy to, but you can’t leave ‘em in L’Manberg. The closer they are to the President and his Cabinet, the more danger they’ll be in. Speaking of, why didn’t you just leave them at home?”

Technoblade stared at him. “They’d probably burn down the house or somethin’. I can’t leave them unsupervised.”

“But we’ve left them unsupervised for the past few minutes and it’s been fine,” Philza pointed out. “They’ve even stopped shouting.”

A pause. Both adults stared at each other.

And then Philza rushed across the room and threw the door open, revealing an empty bedroom. The blankets and bedsheets had been fashioned into a rope, which hung from the wide-open window. Both toddlers were nowhere in sight.

“Shit.”

**43.** *(inspired by Boopers67)*

“Tommy, listen,” Dream snarled. “you fucked up.”

Tommy narrowed his eyes, adjusting his grip on his axe. “I didn’t do this,” he shouted back. “Does this-- does this look like something I would do?!”

“Yes!” Dream shouted, stepping forward. “Yes, it--” He cut himself off.

At the sudden pause, Tubbo turned his attention to Dream. The man had frozen, mouth still half-open as though about to speak.

Then Tommy burst out into hysterical laughter.

“Shut up,” Dream grumbled, stance relaxing. His axe disappeared back into his inventory. “You failed cottagecore as badly as I did.”

Tommy just laughed harder. Dream rolled his eyes.

“Okay,” he declared to the rest of the bewildered people in the ruins of the Community House. “Tommy and I are trapped in a time loop. We’ve worked some stuff out, I’ve paid for my crimes against humanity, and now we’ve been pulling stunts for fifty loops straight, so we’re going to take a break. Excuse us.”

He hopped down from the rock he was standing on, pulled an Ender pearl out of his inventory, and grabbed Tommy by the arm. Before anyone could react, they were gone.

**44.** *the nyan chronicles, pt. 3 (credit to Good\_Pename) ([see previous parts of this loop here](#))*

“Tommy, step away from him.”

Tommy shifted. “Nah,” he said nonchalantly. “I’d rather not.”

“I don’t-- I don’t understand,” Tubbo said weakly. “Why did you break him out? Why are you siding with him? What-- *why?*”

“Think carefully about this,” Quackity warned, his eyes dark. “He can’t be trusted, Tommy. He’s a liar. A manipulator.”

“And you’re not?” Tommy shot back. “I know what you did to Purpled, Quackity. You’re just as bad as *him*.”

“Tommy,” Sam cut in, stepping in front of Quackity before he could react poorly. “Don’t you remember how he hurt you? You can’t-- he’s not your friend, Tommy, he’s lying--”

“Shut up, Sam,” Tommy snarled. The creeper hybrid took a step back at the unexpected vitriol. “You left me to *die*, you asshole. Don’t pretend you care.”

“Tommy, please,” Tubbo begged. “Please don’t do this.”

“Look, as touching as this is,” Dream interrupted, “Can we get on with the arresting part? I know you’re all eager to throw me back in jail--”

Tommy spun on his heel and kicked him in the shin. Dream yelped and hopped away, clutching the bruised area. “Shut up, the adults are talking!”

Dream flipped him off but acquiesced, miming zipping his mouth shut with his other hand. Tubbo’s eyes widened in surprise.

“Tommy,” Quackity repeated, stepping forward. The teenager in question instantly stiffened, drawing a netherite axe from his inventory. The tension skyrocketed as everyone else automatically settled into a fighting stance.

And then a giant eldritch being came crashing through a rip in time and space, jabbed a finger in Dream and Tommy’s direction, and growled, **“You.”**

Dream and Tommy instantly paled. “Oh shit,” the younger muttered, taking an unconscious step back. XD stalked - or, more accurately, floated - forward, his cloak flaring dramatically.

**“You lied to me,”** he snarled. **“George does not like Nyan Cat. He is upset with me.”**

“It was a joke?” Dream tried, a bead of sweat running down the side of his face. “You know, like, a prank?”

XD’s anger appeared to abate a little. **“George has explained these. . . pranks to me. You have. . . ‘pranked’ me?”**

Tommy nodded furiously. “Yeah. Yep. That’s exactly what we did. We pranked you into pranking the whole server and making the jukeboxes play Nyan Cat.”

**“I do not enjoy being lied to.”**

“We’re not lying, big uhhhh, X,” Tommy protested. “You got pranked, but it didn’t hurt anyone, right? And you, uh, successfully pranked the rest of the SMP too. Props and shit to you.”

**“This prank was not funny,”** XD snapped. He floated slightly higher, looming over the two mortals. **“You will regret deceiving me.”**

Dream quickly shoved his way in front of Tommy. “What about a payment?” he asked. Tommy’s head turned sharply towards him. “We’ll give you something as penance for lying to you.”

“Not our souls,” Tommy blurted. Then he clamped his jaw shut, eyes going round as he realized what he’d just said. “Uh, shit, I mean--”

**“Payment,”** XD intoned. He tilted his head in consideration. **“That is acceptable.”**

Dream let out a quiet sigh of relief as the entity floated backwards. XD shrunk, cloak folding up into a lime green hoodie. He landed on the ground between the two groups, now perfectly identical to Dream save for his lack of scars.

**“Give me your discs,”** he intoned. **“And your mask. Your most valuable possessions.”**

A pause. Dream and Tommy glanced at each other, then turned back to XD. “Deal,” they said in unison. Tommy reached into his inventory and produced his ender chest, reluctantly withdrawing his discs and handing them to XD. Dream followed suit with his mask, unclipping it from his head and holding it out.

XD reached out and took them, examining them for a moment before they abruptly caught fire and disintegrated to ash in his hands. Tommy let out an abrupt cry and made to move forward, but Dream hastily pulled him back.

**“Let this be a warning,”** XD rumbled. **“Do not cross me again.”**

There was an awkward pause as he turned away, ripped open another tear in reality, and stepped through it. Both groups of mortals watched as the tear stitched itself back together, disappearing like nothing had been there in the first place.

A low, rumbling growl shattered the silence. Tommy turned to see Tubbo, staring intently at them, hands twitching like he was itching for a weapon. “*You*,” he snarled.

Tommy took a step back. “Uh, big man? You. . . you good?”

“*You* were responsible for the Nyan Cat?!” Tubbo shrieked. Tommy paled as the other teenager pulled a ridiculously oversized sledgehammer from his inventory and started towards them. “I am going to *fucking bash your heads in!*”

“Uh, Tubbo--” Tommy started. Dream grabbed his arm and yanked him back.

“Run,” the older man hissed, shoving him in the other direction. “**RUN!**”

Tubbo lunged. Tommy ran for his life.

#### **45. (inspired by FeelingKrisky)**

Dream resurfaced from unconsciousness to agony. He shuddered, gasping, only to choke on the taste of blood welling at the back of his throat.

Quackity loomed over him, idly tossing his axe from hand to hand. He perked up as Dream rolled onto his side, hacking. “Ah, you’re awake! You passed out for a bit there. My bad, I lost track of time. Kept you under a bit too long.”

Dream dry-heaved, the spittle dripping past his teeth mixing with the water streaming from his hair. Quackity tilted his head.

“Not feeling so good, are you?” He strode forward. Dream flinched back, but he couldn’t avoid the kick. Quackity’s boot caught him right under the chin, sending him onto his back.

“Please,” he wheezed as the duck hybrid approached. He raised his mangled hands in a desperate attempt to fend him off. “Pl-please, no--”

Quackity didn’t even bat an eye. He hoisted Dream up by the front of his orange prison jumpsuit and dragged him forward. Dream struggled, but he was too weak to break free. He was shoved against the edge of the basin, his own terrified expression reflected in the water.

“Just tell me about the book, Dream,” Quackity crooned by his ear. Dream recoiled, but Quackity’s grip remained firm. “Tell me, and the pain will end.”

Dream knew the consequences of giving Quackity the revive book, especially at this point in the timeline. He usually copied some plausible-looking rites into a blank journal and hid it somewhere in his cell, which he would direct Quackity to after a jailbreak. It was a good way to distract him from hunting him down, at least for long enough for Dream to get to a safe hiding place.

Unfortunately, he needed to be in fairly good shape to stage a jailbreak. Which meant escaping usually happened *after* Quackity’s ‘visits’ ended. And he had woken up with Quackity in the cell this time, which meant he had to get through this remaining month of hell before he could get out.

Fuck, he didn’t even know what day it was. If he tried the fake book trick now, Quackity would discover the deception pretty quickly and visit him again. He had no way out.

Gritting his teeth, Dream shook his head. Quackity’s grip tightened. “Alright,” he said conversationally. “Guess we’re doing this again.”

And then Dream was being shoved forward. His heart seized with panic. “WAIT!” he shrieked, but Quackity ruthlessly pushed his head down, facefirst into the water. He thrashed, limbs flailing uselessly as he tried desperately to free himself. His lungs were already burning.

His head wasn’t even fully submerged. Quackity knew the value of shattered hopes, of dangling salvation just out of reach. If Dream could just turn his head, could raise himself up an inch or two, he would be able to breathe. Occasionally, he would feel dry air right at the corner of his mouth, mere *millimeters* away. But Quackity held firm, and no matter how much he struggled, he couldn’t get free. He was drowning in three inches of water.

A bitter laugh slipped past his lips and dissolved into precious bubbles of air. His thrashing slowed, weakening as he ran out of oxygen. Darkness encroached the edges of his vision.

Then just when Dream thought he would slip back into blissful oblivion, Quackity yanked him back. He choked and spluttered, trying to simultaneously take in air and hack out the

water in his lungs.

“Ready to talk?”

“Go to hell,” Dream gasped out, then doubled over and retched. Quackity yanked him upright.

“I’m already there,” he replied, then shoved him towards the basin again. Dream jerked back and dug his heels into the floor, delaying the inevitable. Quackity made a sound of annoyance and kicked his feet out from under him, knocking him the last few inches forward.

And then the alarms began blaring.

Both prisoner and interrogator froze, heads turning towards the wall of lava. “Sam?” Quackity called. “Sam, what’s going on?”

There was no reply. The Warden wasn’t at his post.

Quackity rounded on him, grabbing him by the front of his uniform. “What did you do? *What did you do?*”

“I didn’t do anything,” Dream gasped. Quackity snarled and reached for his axe.

The wall exploded. Quackity instantly ducked back, dragging Dream with him. Dream grimaced as the blade of an axe was wedged under his chin. Together, they waited, watching as the smoke cleared to reveal a hole in the wall.

One TommyInnit clambered through, covered in soot and wielding a netherite pick. He froze when he saw Dream and Quackity, the latter with an axe at the former’s throat. Both were staring at him.

“Bad time?” he asked.

“Bit of a bad time, yeah,” Dream croaked.

“Tommy,” Quackity snapped, his eyes narrowed. “What the hell are you doing?”

Tommy shrugged, casually hefting the pickaxe over his shoulder. “Look, big Q, I hate Dream as much as the next guy, but torture isn’t the answer. If you wanna get your revenge or some shit, you could just replace all his food with chocolate pudding. He hates pudding.”

Dream shuddered. “Don’t give him ideas.”

Tommy eyed him. “You sound like shit.”

“Yeah, well, inhaling water tends to do that to you.”

“You didn’t answer my question,” Quackity broke in. “What. Are you doing?”

Tommy relaxed into a deceptively casual stance, swapping out the pickaxe in his hands for a netherite sword. “I’m here to kill Dream.”

A pause. Quackity lowered his axe an inch or two, letting Dream slump forward. “Sorry Tommy, can’t let you do that. Dream and I were having a nice conversation, and I still need him to tell me something.”

Tommy grinned. “I wasn’t asking for permission, Big Q.”

Through the ruins of the prison wall behind him, a horde of withers rose up. Quackity’s grip on his axe faltered as he took an involuntary step back.

“What the fuck,” he breathed. Dream, feeling his hold loosen, took the opportunity to stomp on his toes and elbow him in the ribs, Quackity stumbled back and Dream twisted free, lunging towards Tommy. Tommy was already moving forward, shoving a stack of ender pearls at him.

“AIM FOR THE ONE WITH THE HAT,” he shouted. Behind them, Quackity was recovering, reaching for his axe. Dream reared his arm back and threw the pearl.

His aim was true. The pearl cracked against the back of a wither sporting a bright red cowboy hat, and soon Dream found himself fifty feet off the ground. He hastily scrambled for purchase on the wither’s back, ignoring the fiery pain in his hands. Tommy joined him a moment later, grabbing him by the wrist and yanking him up onto the wither’s ribcage before he fell.

“GET BACK HERE!” Quackity roared from below them. He was forced to dodge as a skull crashed into the spot he’d been standing a moment before. “YOU SAID YOU WERE HERE TO KILL DREAM!”

“TO QUOTE TECHNOBLADE, ‘I USED AN ADVANCED TECHNIQUE CALLED LYING!’” Tommy hollered back, flipping him off. He turned to Dream. “Sorry, I forgot the regen pots this time.”

“It’s fine. Where’s Sam?” Dream rasped, barely audible over the sound of the withers tearing apart the prison.

“Trapped in a pit.”

“Nice jo--” Dream’s voice cracked. He cut himself off with a wheeze, rubbing his neck.

Tommy grimaced. “Let’s just focus on getting the fuck out,” he grumbled. Dream ducked as shards of blackstone went flying over his head. He gave Tommy a slight nod in lieu of a verbal reply. Grinning, Tommy grabbed ahold of the reins on the wither and turned it around.

As they flew off, Dream gave Quackity (and the ruined prison by proxy) one last middle finger. Then winced, because *oh shit he forgot his fingers were broken.*



## Chapter End Notes

**My brain:** this is supposed to be a crack fic

**Me, writing a torture scene:** . . . oops?

Sorry it's not that funny. School just started and I'm not feeling the humor rn

WE GOT ANOTHER INSPIRED FIC AND [MORE FANART](#) FROM THE AMAZING POTTEDCACTI! GO CHECK THEM OUT

### Loop Notes

**42.** Two toddlers loose in L'Manberg. What will they do?

**44.** Hell hath no fury like a sleep-deprived Tubbo with a sledgehammer. Especially if you're the one responsible for his sleep deprivation.

**45.** Yes, Tommy tamed a whole pack of withers. Mostly to spite Technoblade. The one with the cowboy hat is named Fred.

# Chapter 10

## Chapter Notes

[FANART](#) FOR THE TODDLER ARC BY MIXY\_TTWARA IT'S BEAUTIFUL  
HSJKDLJ

### Spotlighted Comments

**AshPhantomBeeDragon:** Me: \*casually enjoying the angst\* This is fine. \*sips champagne\*

**teadaddy and insomniousscat:** most of the plot for this work deadass play out like

Dream: you doing okay?

Tommy: nope, how bout you

Dream: oh absolutely not

Tommy & Dream: . . .

Dream: let's go fuck with everyone again

Tommy: hell yeah man, go grab the glitter

The rest of the SMP, now with a built in glitter sixth sense: o h n o

**Courtesy Call:** "the idea that DreamXD would play nyancat on repeat just cause George "likes" it is a perfect encapsulation of his personality: a simp.

**Mixy\_ttwara:** Everybody gangsta until we get Quackity ""kindly asking"" Dream for the revive book

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

**46.** *the adventures of dreaxter, pt. 5 (credit to curry\_powder) ([see previous parts of this loop here](#))*

“Seriously,” Tommy deadpanned. “Where the fuck do you get so much glitter.”

*“I said, I have my sources,”* Dream muttered, inspecting their handiwork. *“Wait, I think this spot needs a bit more.”*

“That’s not an answer,” Tommy grumbled. He stalked over, unscrewed another jar of edible glitter, and threw it all over the casino wall. “Do I even want to know?”

*“Do you?”* Dream returned unhelpfully. Tommy rolled his eyes as he screwed the jar lid back on, then surveyed their handiwork.

“Think we’re done?”

*“Unless you want to completely bury Las Nevadas, then yeah, I think this is enough.”*

“Pog.”

“What the fuck?”

Teenager and ghost turned around to see Quackity staring at them. Tommy waved, realized he was still holding the incriminating jar, and hastily shoved it into his inventory. “Heyyyyy, big Q.”

“What the fuck,” Quackity repeated. He gestured at the casino wall, the ground beneath them, and at the Needle in the distance. All three, along with the rest of Las Nevadas, were blanketed in slightly sticky (for the vertical surfaces), edible glitter. “I-- what-- *did you do this?*”

“Nope,” Tommy lied. “It was like this when we got here.”

Quackity looked skeptical. Which was understandable, because as far as lies went, this wasn’t exactly Tommy’s finest. Thankfully, Dream chose that moment to step in.

“*Quackity!*” he chirped. The casino owner instantly went three shades paler. “*Hi! How’re you doing?*”

“You’re a ghost?” Quackity blurted, then shut his eyes and shook his head. “Fuck, of course you’d come back to haunt us.”

“Hey, Dreaxter’s not that bad,” Tommy butted in. “Still kinda a bitch, but on the level of bitchiness, he’s nowhere near Dream.”

“*Aw thanks, Tommy!*” Dreaxter cheered, even as he sent Tommy a look that promised certain death. Tommy was completely unaffected, having long grown immune to The Look.

Quackity paused, a calculating look in his eyes. “You. . . you’re not Dream?”

“*No,*” the ghost denied vehemently. “*Dream was mean. Or, at least everyone told me he was.* . .”

“You don’t remember what Dream did?”

Dreaxter shrugged. “*I forgot a lot of stuff. Speaking of, where did you get that scar? It looks really cool!*”

Tommy winced. Dreaxter really knew how to hit the wrong buttons.

Quackity’s hands clenched and unclenched, like he was forcing himself to remain calm. “Thanks,” he gritted out. Instead of answering Dream’s question, he changed the subject. “So what the hell are you doing in Las Nevadas? Why the fuck did you cover everything with-- with glitter?”

“We didn’t cover everything with glitter,” Tommy protested. “I told you, it was already like that when we got here.”

“Bullshit,” Quackity deadpanned.

“I’m serious.”

“Tommy, the two of you are *literally* the only ones here--”

“What, big Q, do you not exist?”

“You know what I fucking mean! And why the hell would I cover my own nation in glitter?!”

“It’s a stylistic choice.”

“For *fuck’s sake*--”

Meanwhile, Dreaxter had wandered over to the casino wall. He stared at it for a long moment, then leaned forward and licked it. Quackity stuttered in the middle of his sentence and stopped to stare at the ghost.

Tommy noticed the pause. “What?” He followed his gaze. “Dreaxter, don’t lick walls. It’s bad for you.”

Dreaxter shrugged and licked the casino wall again. Quackity made a noise like a dying seal.

“*The glitter tastes good,*” the ghost explained. “*I’m already dead, it’s not like I’ll get sick.*”

“What-- what the fuck,” Quackity spluttered. “What the *fuck* is wrong with you.”

“It’s edible glitter. And I know that because I tried some of it, not because I was the one who put it there,” Tommy clarified. “Definitely not me. Yeah.”

Quackity just stared wordlessly at them, performing a human rendition of the Blue Screen of Death. Tommy laughed nervously and grabbed Dreaxter by the arm. “We’ll be on our way now, big Q! Uh, big man things to do, people to traumatize-- nice talking to you seeyouaroundbye!”

#### 47. lava, pt. 4 ([see previous parts of this loop here](#))

Tommy stared out at the crater that lay before him. Clouds gathered in the sky, heavy with rain.

The first time, he’d felt anger. So much anger, and grief, and hatred for Dream and Philza and Technoblade.

Now, after seeing L’Manberg destroyed for the hundredth time, he just felt numb. It would get fixed by the next reset, anyways. There was no point wasting time feeling bad about it.

But Ghostbur. No matter how many times he looped, Ghostbur’s reaction always shook him to the core. The ghost was floating at the edge of the crater, blank-faced, streaks of blue dripping down his cheeks.

*"I take it back,"* he said quietly. *"Tommy, I take it back. I . . . I want you to bring me back to life."*

Tommy swallowed. "Ghostbur. . ."

Ghostbur turned to him, face still horribly expressionless. More blue welled in his colorless eyes. *"It's gone, Tommy. It's all gone."*

"Don't. . ." Tommy croaked. His mouth was dry. "It's going to be okay, Ghostbur. It's not. . . L'Manberg is gone, but the people are still here. As long as we're alive, as long as we're here, L'Manberg will live on."

*"It's not the same,"* Ghostbur whispered.

"It's not," Tommy agreed quietly. "But it's something."

Tubbo snorted to his left, eyeing the smoking crater. "Better than nothing, right?" he asked with a touch of bitterness. Ranboo, standing a little ways behind him, shifted uneasily and said nothing.

"Fuck Dream," Quackity muttered. He looked up at the obsidian grid above them. "Fuck Technoblade. Fuck Philza."

"It's not the end," Tommy snapped. "We'll fuckin' survive."

"L'Manberg is a *hole in the ground*, Tommy!" Tubbo shouted, rounding on him. "This is the third time it's been destroyed. It's gone. Dead!"

"But *we're* alive, aren't we?!" Tommy shot back. "They killed our country but we're still here! Live to spite them, for fuck's sake! Don't give up!"

"I'm not giving up!" Tubbo snapped.

"Good!"

*"Good!"*

A long moment of silence followed the abrupt conclusion of their not-quite-argument. And then a voice sounded from high above them, causing several people to start in surprise. "The floor is lava!"

A pause. "Oh, *fuck you*," Tommy swore with vitriol, slamming down two blocks and hopping onto them. "Seriously. Fuck. You. I hope you break your arm."

Dream cackled, lounging on the obsidian grid hanging over L'Manberg. "We did agree that we could do it anytime," he called. "What better time than after destroying your country?"

"I hate you," Tommy seethed. "You're an absolute fucking *bastard*-- "

“Thanks for the compliment, *child--*” Dream shrieked in surprise as an arrow went whistling past his face. “HEY!”

“What the fuck?” Quackity asked nobody in particular. Dream beat a hasty retreat as Tommy reloaded his crossbow.

**48.**

*“Snapmap. Sapmap. Napsap.”*

“My name is *Sapnap*,” Sapnap growled, not turning around. The ghost hovering over his shoulder nodded wisely.

*“If you say so, Snapchat.”*

Sapnap’s eye twitched. “It’s Sapnap.”

*“That’s what I said. Sanpap.”*

Sapnap set down the whetstone and turned around, jabbing the ghost with the tip of his newly sharpened sword. “Why don’t you go bother someone else?”

*“Nope,”* Toast refuted. *“I’m not leaving until I get your name right.”*

Sapnap let out a hissing sigh, visibly trying to remain calm. “Sap. Nap. S-A-P-N-A-P,” he gritted out. “Seriously, it’s literally two syllables. Not that hard of a name to get.”

*“Spam.”*

“Okay, now I *know* you’re fucking with me.” Sapnap got to his feet, twirling the sword. “Shoo or I stab you.”

Toast gasped, affronted. *“You’d threaten a poor ghost like me? Snapple, I thought we were friends!”*

“You’re not a ‘poor’ anything!” Sapnap snapped. “You’re a fucking menace. Go find someone else to haunt. Dream killed you, right? Go bother him!”

*“But Subpoena, I’m just trying to get your name right!”*

“That’s not even *close*!”

**49. adoption arc, pt. 4 ([see previous parts of this loop here](#))**

“What the fuck.”

“Hi,” Ranboo said nervously. “Uh. I’m Ranboo? I’m new here.”

“What the fuck,” the blonde boy repeated, staring blankly at him. His shorter companion elbowed him in the ribs and stepped forward, holding out a hand.

“Hey, I’m Tubbo!” he chirped cheerily. “That’s Tommy. Sorry about him, he’s kinda bad at social interaction.”

“Excuse you?!” The tall blonde-- *Tommy* cut in. “I’m the fucking best at social in- inter-intra--”

“Interaction,” Tubbo supplied.

“--interaction! Don’t listen to Tubbo, he spouts lies and slander--”

“I speak the truth,” Tubbo declared. “Trust me, Rambo.”

Ranboo smiled nervously. “Uh, my name’s. Um. Ranboo.”

Tubbo winced. “Whoops, sorry. Ranboo.”

“Ranboob,” Tommy added, an evil grin spreading across his face. It quickly disappeared when Tubbo stepped on his foot.

“Don’t scare off the fresh meat,” Tubbo chided, ignoring Ranboo’s questioning mutter of “*fresh meat?*” He turned to Ranboo, and then *holy moly* he was literally *right next to him* *Ranboo hadn’t even seen him move how?* “Wow, Tommy,” he said, staring up at Ranboo. “I think he’s even taller than you.”

“Uh. . . th-thanks?” Ranboo stuttered, still trying to figure out how Tubbo had gotten up in his face without him noticing. Tubbo beamed at him, then looked back at Tommy, who was balancing on one foot and rubbing the one Tubbo had stepped on with a grimace on his face.

“Height check!” Tubbo called.

“Fuck off,” Tommy snapped. Oh boy. Ranboo hoped he hadn’t upset him.

Nah, who was he kidding? Tommy probably hated him already.

“Tommy,” Tubbo chirped. There was a note of warning in his voice. “Height check.”

Tommy looked up, looked at Ranboo, then rolled his eyes and straightened up. Ranboo shrunk into himself a bit as the human stalked over, muttering something under his breath. He was pretty tall for a non-hybrid, all things considered. He also didn’t seem very happy at the moment.

Ranboo ducked his head in an attempt to seem smaller. Maybe if Tubbo said they were the same height, Tommy wouldn’t get mad?

“Oh for fuck’s sake,” Tommy grumbled as Tubbo stepped back to assess their heights. “Stand up, man. You’re gonna get back problems with posture like that.”

Ranboo blinked. “I-- sorry?”

“Stand up,” Tommy repeated. “Don’t fold in on yourself like that. You’re tall, be proud of it.”

Ranboo hesitantly straightened up. Tommy smirked up at him.

“That’s more like it,” he declared. “Prime, you’re absolutely fucking *massive*. What the hell do you eat?”

Ranboo shuffled nervously. “I’m, uh. Half enderman.”

“Explains a lot,” Tommy muttered. “You comfortable with eye contact?”

Ranboo blinked in surprise. Nobody. . . nobody had ever asked him that before, actually. People usually reacted pretty negatively when they found out he was a hostile mob hybrid. But Tommy and Tubbo weren’t looking at him like they expected him to suddenly go feral. No, Tommy had asked if Ranboo was *comfortable* with eye contact.

Maybe he’d misjudged Tommy.

Ranboo felt a bit of his nervousness dissipate. “Uh, yeah. It, it bothers me sometimes, when I’m, uh, really emotional, but, uh, just, like this is fine.”

Tommy nodded. “Got it, big man.” Then he paused, face screwing up like he’d bitten a lemon. “I’m still the bigger man, of course.”

“And I’m the biggest man of all!” Tubbo called.

Tommy opened his mouth to argue, paused, then shrugged. “And Tubbo is the biggest man of them all.”

Tubbo cheered, and Ranboo was surprised to find himself smiling. Maybe this server wouldn’t be so bad after all.

---

“Why the fuck is Ranboo on the server?!”

“I invited him,” Dream said, like he saw nothing wrong with that.

“Dream, he joined after the Sixteenth last time.”

“I tracked him down and invited him earlier than I did in loop zero,” Dream amended.

Tommy stared at him. “*Why?*”



Dream shrugged. "I did say I was going to adopt all the minors, didn't I? Might as well get a head start."

**50.** (*inspired by Havis*)

"We need a distraction," Wilbur hissed. He ducked as another arrow went flying over their heads. "Something to get them off our backs long enough for us to get behind them."

Tommy grinned. "I got this," he assured them. Ignoring Tubbo's cry of "Wait!" he hopped out from behind the wall, sidestepping an arrow that would have taken his eye out.

"Dad! Stop shooting for one fucking second and listen to me!"

The effect was instantaneous. Dream dropped his bow, gaping at him. Meanwhile, George, Sapnap and Punz all glanced at each other before simultaneously swiveling to stare at Dream.

"I-- you-- *what?*" Dream spluttered.

Tommy fought hard to keep a serious expression on his face. "Dad," he repeated, crossing his arms. "Seriously. Just let us get our independence--"

"Wait wait wait wait," Sapnap interrupted, stepping in between the two of them. "You-- he-- what the *fuck?*"

Tommy could feel his poker face slowly cracking. "He adopted me a while back," he informed the group.

"Not-- not as your *dad!*" Dream shrieked. His ears had gone bright red. "Don't-- what the hell-- *why* the hell--"

Tommy nodded. "You did adopt me. Which makes you my dad."

"You *adopted* Tommy?" George demanded, rounding on Dream. "Why didn't you tell us?!"

"I'm not his dad," Dream protested weakly.

Tommy gasped, eyes welling up with crocodile tears. "You. . . you don't want me?"

"Wait wait wait no!" Dream cried as Sapnap's eyes narrowed. "No, I meant that I--"

"That's kinda fucked up," Tommy continued, bulldozing right through his argument. "I mean, you were the one that wanted to adopt me. And now you're just gonna abandon me?"

"*Dream!*" George scolded. Dream let out something between a hysterical laugh and a wail of despair, sinking to his knees and burying his face in his hands.

At that moment, Wilbur and the other revolutionaries burst out of the treeline behind the Dream SMP fighters. Dream and the others whipped around, but it was already too late. With

the element of surprise on their side, the L'Manbergians easily cut them down. Tommy finally let his affronted expression drop, collapsing to the ground in a fit of cackling.

“Oh my fucking Prime,” he wheezed. “Did you-- did you see his *face*--”

He was interrupted by Wilbur, who dropped down to his knees in front of him, placed his hands on his shoulders, and asked very seriously, “Tommy, did Dream adopt you?”

Tommy snorted. “Only kinda,” he replied dismissively. “It’ll be a cold day in the Nether before I call him ‘dad’ unironically.”

“Wait, wait, wait,” Fundy cut in. “You said ‘only kinda’ -- that wasn't-- that wasn't a *no*. ”

Tommy sighed. “It’s a long story,” was all he said. “A *really* long story.”

## Chapter End Notes

,,,so tired,,, sorry short chapter. I barely survived (metaphorically) the first week of school and things happened with hurricane ida  
Everyone affected by the hurricanes, I am so sorry and I hope things get better for you soon.

### **Loop Notes**

**48.** Every DSMP fanfiction writer knows the pain of Sapnap’s name autocorrecting to ‘Subpoena’.

**49.** Dream’s speedrunning his adoption arc. In the meantime, Tommy’s going to help Ranboo grow a backbone.

**50.** Tommy gets revenge for the adoption arc. And it really is a long story, involving temporal shenanigans and lots of chaos.

# Chapter 11

## Chapter Notes

So. How we feeling about the newest SAD-IST animation? Because I freaking LOVE IT  
Also TFTSMP SEASON 2 IN OCTOBER WHOOOOO

### Spotlighted Comments

**teacupi:** the godfucking damn 'subpoena' autocorrect..... it haunts me

**Oragameyi** Everyone gangsta 'til Tommy calls Dream dad.

**Ghost\_Of\_Vivi:** Tommy: \*calling dream dad\*

Dream: \*blue screen error\*

Everyone else: WHAT THE DUXK WHAT THE FUCK WHAT THE HECKING  
HECKLED FUCK

**curry\_powder:** What if you wanted to type “Sapnap”, but autocorrect said,  
“*Subpoena.*”

**Mixy\_ttwara :** I've come to the conclusion that Quackity is not paid enough for putting  
up with this shit

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

## 51.

“He’s nothing but a pawn, Tommy!” Dream shouted.

“Shut the fuck up, bitch,” Tommy snarled, hurling something at his head. Dream caught it on reflex.

“Wh-- a pawn?” he asked incredulously, only to get hit in the mask with another pawn.

“I have more,” Tommy threatened, holding up a fistful of small, wooden chess pieces. “Don’t call Tubbo a pawn.”

Tubbo, standing on the sidelines, looked half-bewildered and half-amused. “Uh, Tommy, it’s okay--”

“No, no, no, it’s not okay,” Tommy snapped, jabbing a finger in his direction. “You are a fucking *human being*. You make your own life decisions. You’re not a *pawn*.”

Dream cleared his throat. And was promptly hit in the chestplate with another pawn.

“I didn’t even say anything!” he protested, then glanced down at the pawn lying on the floor. “Wh-- is that made out of *netherite*?”

“Shut,” Tommy snapped, pointing a threatening finger at him. He rounded on Tubbo. “You’re not. A. Pawn. Repeat it after me, Tubbo.”

Tubbo gave him an exhausted half-smile. “Tommy. . .”

“Say it.”

Tubbo shrugged. “He’s right, though. I’m a pawn.” He gestured to the blackstone walls around them. “And this is checkmate. Better to just accept it.”

Tommy gritted his teeth and rounded on Dream. “This is all your fucking fault,” he accused. “Now Tubbo’s making fuckin’ *chess metaphors*.”

Dream sighed. “Tommy--”

A pawn enchanted with Knockback II sent him crashing into the wall.

## **52. remix, pt. 1**

Tommy slammed a picture down onto the courtroom table. It was an image of George’s burning house. A picture of Dream giving the camera a thumbs up, which had obviously been cut out of another picture, was glued into the space next to the house.

Tommy pointed at the paper. “Caught in 4K, bitch!”

A long moment of silence. Dream stared down at the picture, expression hidden behind his mask. Tubbo cringed and waited for the fallout.

“Oh, no,” Dream said dully. “You caught me. I lied, I burned down George’s house. Guess this means I have to go into exile.”

“What?” Tubbo blurted.

“I am hereby exiled from L’Manberg, and the Dream SMP, until the fourth of January next year,” Dream droned on. “As the owner of this server, I’m handing it over to Tommy until I return.”

“*What?*” Tubbo repeated.

“As the temporary holder of the SMP,” Tommy added, grinning widely, “I’ll escort Dream into exile and check in with him occasionally to make sure he stays put.”

“Wait, wait, wait,” Tubbo protested. “I’m-- hold on a second--”

Dream turned to him. “Is there a problem?”

Tubbo shoved down his instinctive fear of the man and stood his ground. “You-- *what?*”

“Dream burned down George’s house,” Tommy explained gleefully. “So he’s getting exiled.”

Tubbo stared at them, torn. On one hand, he was happy that Dream wasn't pressuring him to exile Tommy anymore. On the other hand, *what the fuck?* The 'evidence' that had been the basis for Dream's decision to exile himself was so obviously fake that even a *three-year-old* would be able to tell. And Dream had been insisting that Tommy had been guilty five minutes ago-- why the hell did he suddenly change his story?

None of this made sense. Tubbo glanced helplessly at Tommy, who winked at him. The message was obvious: *trust me*.

"Well?" Dream asked. Tubbo mutely shook his head and stepped aside.

Tommy led Dream out of the courtroom, leaving a stunned audience behind them.

---

"So," Dream said, staring down at the exile beach. "What do we do now?"

Tommy shrugged. "Whatever we want, I guess."

Dream hummed. "Any ideas?"

A long moment of silence. "I've actually been thinking about this since the body-switch loop," Tommy admitted. "But, uh, Dream, wanna try being the good guy for once?"

Dream straightened in surprise and turned to him. "What?"

Tommy shrugged uncomfortably. "Stop me if this sounds weird, okay, but I wanna understand what was going through your head in loop zero."

Dream's face went blank. "Trust me, you don't."

Tommy rolled his eyes. "Oh, shut it with your stupid fucking self-hatred shit. I was just thinking-- you're always, like, the bad guy in these loops--"

"Not always."

"Almost always," Tommy amended. "And nobody in L'Manberg has ever liked you except for that one loop where you literally hit Wilbur over the head with a peace treaty. This loop just gave us, like, the perfect setup for. . . for a roleswap, or whatever the fuck it's called."

Dream swallowed. "That. . . that doesn't seem very, uh. Fun. Not for. . . not for you, at least."

"Probably not," Tommy admitted. "But. . . it's a better chance for us to understand each other or some shit, right? We're. . . we're gonna be stuck in these loops for. . . whoever the fuck knows how long." He grimaced. "I'm not-- I'm not saying that we're gonna do *exactly* what we did in loop zero, because like *hell* am I ever gonna--" he gestured sharply at the beach,

then took a deep breath and calmed himself down. "I'm just saying, like. . . the general plotline. I'm the owner of the SMP, you're in exile. . ."

"And I'd fight you for the discs?" Dream asked dryly.

Tommy pointed at him. "Okay, first of all, those are *my* discs, fuck off. Second of all, I was thinking, like, your mask or something."

A pause. Dream looked at Tommy, then back down at the beach.

"Okay."

"Okay?" Tommy repeated, raising an eyebrow. "Just like that?"

Dream shrugged. "Yeah. Okay."

Tommy frowned. "Look, man, if you're agreeing because you feel guilty or some shit--"

"I'm not," Dream interrupted. He offered a wry half-smile. "I *am* pretty curious. Why not give it a try?"

A pause. Tommy looked down at the beach. "Alright, then," he muttered. "Let's do this shit."

## 53.

Dream stepped into Niki's bakery, smiling as the scent of cinnamon filled his nose. Niki looked up from where she was setting a fresh tray of cinnamon buns on display and beamed at him.

"Hello, Dream!" she called. "Here to bake today?"

Dream shrugged. "If you've got the time. If not, that's fine."

Niki shook her head. "This is perfect, actually. I need your help with something. Are you any good at teaching?"

"Teaching?" Dream eyed the door behind the counter. "Depends on who I'll be teaching."

At that moment, the door behind the counter cracked open. Karl Jacobs stuck his head through, a spot of flour stuck to his cheek. "Dream!" He greeted happily. "I thought I heard you!"

"Hey, Karl," Dream replied. He raised an eyebrow at Niki. "So we're teaching Karl how to bake?"

"Got it in one," Niki chirped, arranging the last of the cinnamon buns and pulling off her gloves.

"Join us," Karl added. "We have cookies."

“Can’t say no to cookies,” Dream joked. Niki had a strict ‘no weapons in the kitchen’ rule, so he dropped his weapons into his ender chest before he stepped around the counter. “After you.”

“Why thank you,” Nihachu replied, giving him a slight curtsy before she swept through the door to the back of the bakery. Karl stepped aside as she passed through, bowing at the waist.

“The queen returns to her kingdom,” he announced dramatically, then broke down giggling. Dream smiled as Niki let out a laugh of her own.

The ingredients had been piled haphazardly on the center island, presumably by Karl. Dream ran an eye over them as he donned an apron. “So,” he said. “Where are the cookies I was promised?”

“We’re gonna bake them!”

“So you don’t have cookies.”

“Not right now,” Karl admitted. “But they exist in the future. That counts for something, right?”

“Think of it this way,” Niki cut in. “The sooner we get to baking them, the sooner we’ll be able to eat them.”

A pause.

And then Karl *bolted* over to the counter in the center of the kitchen, snatching a spatula and holding it up like he was about to stab someone with it. “What’re we waiting for?” he demanded. “Let’s go!”

---

“I don’t get it,” Karl admitted, squinting at the recipe Niki had taped on the wall. “Are red velvet cookies just normal cookies with red food dye?”

“Sort of,” Niki replied, not looking up from the teaspoon she was painstakingly shaking salt into. Next to her, Dream tried to sneak a chocolate chip from the bag. “Dream, don’t eat the ingredients until the cookies are done.”

“But *chocolate*,” Dream protested.

Karl whipped around. “*Chocolate?*”

“We’re adding chocolate chips. I have some white chocolate, if you want that instead.”

“Ooo, can we add white chocolate?” Karl asked, hurrying over to peer at the chocolate chips with sparkling eyes. Dream wrinkled his nose.

“You like white chocolate?”

Karl nodded vigorously. “White chocolate is the *best*.”

“It’s too sweet.”

“Blasphemy,” Karl cried, pointing a finger at Dream’s face. “You take that back!”

“No,” Dream returned cheerily. “We’re not adding white chocolate to the cookies.”

“We *are*,” Karl insisted.

“Compromise,” Niki suggested. “We’ll add dark chocolate to half of them and white to the rest.”

A pause. Karl and Dream glanced at each other.

“Works for me,” Dream offered with a shrug. Karl narrowed his eyes.

“I *will* make you like white chocolate,” he promised. Dream grinned.

“You can *try*.”

---

“You tap the egg on the side of the bowl,” Niki explained patiently, “Then break it in like this.”

“Like this?” Karl cracked the egg, letting it drop into the bowl. Dream stared at him.

“How.”

Karl turned and blinked at him. Niki giggled.

“Dream has trouble cracking eggs,” she explained. Dream scowled.

“I *don’t*,” he protested. “It’s the eggs that have a problem with *me*.”

“Keep telling yourself that,” Niki chirped, patting him on the shoulder and leaving a flour handprint. “Oops.”

Dream stared down at the handprint, then looked Niki in the eye and deliberately reached out and patted her on the shoulder, leaving a matching handprint.

Karl glanced between the two of them, then slapped his hand in a puddle of flour on the counter and clapped it on his own shoulder. “Now we match!”

Niki laughed.



---

“Press it between your palms, like this.”

Karl narrowed his eyes at the handful of cookie dough he was holding, trying to imitate what Dream was doing.

“Then move your hands in a circle. Like this.” The cookie dough gradually took on the shape of a ball. Dream set it down on the baking sheet.

“Woah,” Karl said, setting his own ball of cookie dough down on the sheet. “I didn’t know you could do that.” He paused. “Wait, are we just going to bake them like this? We’re not going to flatten them out?”

“They’ll expand on their own, and we’ll flatten them a bit after they’ve been in the oven for a few minutes,” Niki explained. “That’ll give them crinkle tops.”

“Crinkle tops?”

“The cracks on top of the cookies. You’ll see what I mean when they’re baked.”

“Okay.”

---

Karl bit his lip, edging towards the open oven. Niki beckoned him closer. “Don’t worry, the gloves will protect you from the heat.”

“I’m not wearing a glove on my *face*,” Karl muttered, but he carefully leaned in and snatched the tray of finished cookies off the rack. Breathing a sigh of relief, he turned around, only to slip and land on a bag of flour. The bag burst open and flour filled the air, covering them with a fine layer of white powder. The cloud billowed outwards, filling the room and moving towards the open flame beneath the oven. Dream’s eyes widened.

“Wait no *look out--!*”

---

“Well,” Niki said. “That could have gone better.”

Dream poked a smoking piece of rubble with his foot. “Understatement of the year.”

“I am so sorry,” Karl whispered, trying to sink into the ground. “I am *so* sorry.”

Niki patted his shoulder. “Not your fault,” she told him. “. . . Though I’d appreciate it if you helped me rebuild.”

“*Definitely*,” Karl promised.

“What the hell happened here?”

Niki beamed. “President Soot!” she called. “How are you?”

“Fundy,” the fox hybrid corrected automatically, gaze fixed on the rubble. “What happened to your bakery?”

“We tried to bake red velvet cookies,” Dream muttered. He wiped his soot-stained fingertips on the front of his singed apron. “Flour and fire don’t mix.”

Fundy eyed the smoking ruins of the bakery. “. . . You don’t happen to have any cookies, do you?” At the looks he received, he raised his hands. “What? I’m hungry!”

“Actually,” Karl piped up, “I, uh, did manage to salvage the cookies.”

He proceeded to pull the tray of cookies from his inventory. A few had been half-blackened by the explosion, but the rest were in a fairly decent state.

“Well,” Dream said after a long moment of silence. He reached out and took a cookie. “At least it wasn’t a *complete* failure-- oh wait, these are the white chocolate ones. Nevermind. Total failure.”

Karl scowled in mock-offense. “You take that back!”

### 53. lava, pt. 5 ([see previous parts of this loop here](#))

“Say goodbye,” Dream ordered, twisting the axe in his grip. Tubbo locked eyes with Tommy, a defeated smile on his face.

“No,” Tommy protested weakly. “You. . . you can’t. . .”

The Ender portal set into the wall behind them hummed. Except instead of Punz, *Ranboo* crashed through, eyes wide with panic.

“THE FLOOR IS LAVA!” he screamed.

Both loopers were already moving, Dream practically *throwing* Tubbo and his axe away in his haste to tower up. Meanwhile, Tommy, who had nothing in his inventory and therefore couldn’t tower, sprinted across the room to the hallway where the pets were kept and hopped onto Henry’s fence. Tubbo was left standing in the middle of the room, holding Dream’s axe with a bewildered expression on his face.

“Oh thank Prime it worked,” Ranboo breathed as the others began pouring out of the portal behind him.

Dream froze at the top of his tower, eyes narrowed. He pointed at Ranboo. “Wait,” he said. “What?”

“*What?*” Tommy repeated, wobbling precariously on top of the fence. “That’s-- you said-- *what?*”

“It’s okay, Tommy,” Sam soothed, leaving the crowd that had gathered in front of the portal and approaching Tommy. He raised his hands in a sort of calming gesture, like Tommy was a cornered animal. “You can come down from the fence now.”

“What the fuck,” Tommy said blankly. He did not come down from the fence. “You-- Ranboo-- what--”

“We needed a way to stop him from killing Tubbo,” Ranboo called, a sheepish look on his face. “I heard Techno muttering about Dream acting weird and ‘the floor is lava’, and then when I put that together with what happened at the Community House and on Doomsday, I realized that you were playing a game of some kind. So, uh, when I realized Dream had, um, an axe to Tubbo’s neck, I kinda. . .”

“Panicked and hoped we’d react automatically?” Tommy asked dryly.

Ranboo grimaced. “Basically. Yeah.”

“I’m impressed,” Dream said slowly. Everyone else in the room instantly leveled him with glares. He winced and raised his hands. “Shutting up now.”

“It’s over, Dream,” Sapnap snapped. He pointed his axe at the man balancing at the top of his tower. “Give up and get down here.”

“I can’t go down there,” Dream said petulantly. “The floor is still lava.”

There was a moment of disbelieving silence.

“Oh for *fuck’s sake*,” Sapnap snarled. He slammed down a block and began towering up. Dream yelped and scrambled as far away from the other man as he could. Which wasn’t very far, because he was literally standing on a one-block tower.

Sapnap was soon level with him. The man jabbed a sword in his direction. “Come. Down. Now.”

“Okay, okay!” Dream practically shrieked, scrambling off the tower and landing in a crouch on the floor. “I’m down! I’m down!”

“HA!” Tommy screamed. “I WIN, BITCH!”

“FUCK OFF!” Dream shouted back. “SAPNAP MADE ME, IT DOESN’T COUNT!”

“NO RULES AGAINST THAT!”

“THIS IS CHEATING--”

“YOU’RE GOING TO JAIL, YOUR OPINION IS INVALID.”

“THAT MAKES NO SENSE!”

“YOUR FACE MAKES NO SENSE!”

Tubbo interrupted the argument by stalking up to Dream and shoving his own axe under his chin. Dream yelped and rapidly backpedaled, throwing up his arms in the universal ‘I surrender’ gesture. “Woah woah woah wait! Don’t kill me, don’t kill me--”

Tubbo stalked after him as he retreated. “Why shouldn’t I?” he demanded, slightly hysterical. “You’ve-- you’ve caused so much hurt, so much-- all of this-- L’Manberg, everything, it was your fault! Why shouldn’t I just kill you right now?!”

“Because I can bring people back to life!” Dream shouted. Tubbo froze. “If I die, then death is permanent!”

Tubbo lowered his axe. “You. . . you can bring people back to life?”

“Yes,” Dream confirmed. “. . . Schlatt. . . Schlatt gave me a book. A revive book. I can bring Wilbur back to life, but if you kill me. . .”

Tubbo glanced back at the crowd, conflicted. Tommy huffed and decided to speed the process along.

“Oi, Dream,” he called. “You were buildin’ a prison or some shit, right? Why don’t we just lock you up in there?”

“That’s. . . actually a good idea,” Sam muttered.

“Oi, what’s that supposed to mean?!”

Sam realized how he’d phrased it. “Wait, no I didn’t mean it like that--”

Tommy scowled and crossed his arms, only to lose his balance. Sam lunged forward and managed to catch him before the floor. He grunted as Tommy began clambering up his back like a deranged koala.

“Ranboo!” Tommy shouted in panic. “RANBOO! THE FLOOR IS STILL LAVA!”

“What?” Ranboo asked blankly.

“COUNT DOWN FROM FIVE, YOU BITCH!”

“Please,” Sam added, hunched over and struggling to maintain his balance with Tommy half-hanging off his back.

“Uh, five four three two one?”

The moment Ranboo reached one, Tommy let out a sigh of relief, releasing his hold on Sam. Unfortunately, his foot had gotten tangled in one of Sam’s armor straps, and he pulled the creeper hybrid down with him. They both went crashing to the floor.

“Karma,” Dream called from down the hallway. Tommy wiggled one arm out from under Sam and flipped him off.

## 54.

“No, that’s not-- that’s not--” His head ached. “I don’t understand. It’s not-- *why*? What’s happening? Everything’s *different*.”

There was no reply. There was no one around to hear him.

“I can’t,” he mumbled. “I have to know. . . what. . . what happened. Why-- it’s not a lie, it *can’t* be a lie.”

One foot in front of the other. He paced in a tight circle, eyes darting to the board hanging on the wall. “It doesn’t make sense. I don’t-- everything feels so *wrong*.” He paused, then removed a journal from his inventory and flipped it open. “The answers-- they have to be somewhere. Maybe I should try just--? No, I can’t trust them. I just need to keep searching. Something will turn up. Eventually.”

He turned and left the room.

## 55. (*credit to curry\_powder*)

Tommy had waited a *year* for this. He’d been careful. Meticulous in his planning. And now, it would all come to fruition. All his hard work and research throughout the last few loops.

It was going to be *glorious*.

“Okay, Chat,” he called. Instantly, every head in the flock of crows surrounding his feet snapped towards him. “Remember Project Icarus?”

Loud caws. The crows did remember.

“Well, we’re starting the final stage today.”

Louder cawing. Several crows hopped up and down in anticipation. Others went completely still, watching him with beady eyes.

Tommy grinned. “Remember: lifetime supply of gapple seeds. Phil’s gone to have a chat-- er, *talk* with Dream right now. Follow him like you usually do, but when you see Dream. . . you

know what to do.”

The crows raised their voices in assent, then took off in a cloud of black feathers. Tommy watched them for a moment, then hastily ran after them. He had to see the results.

---

Dream sighed. After their last disastrous attempt at working together, Tommy had taken to avoiding him during the loops. They didn’t even stick to a concrete plan anymore - both of them literally just did as they pleased.

Which was why he’d joined the Syndicate this time around. He’d given himself the name Menoetius (“Interesting choice,” Technoblade had commented with an unreadable look), and taken to wearing an unmarked mask. He always remained silent when he was around the other Syndicate members, keeping his hood up and as much of his body hidden as possible. The reason? As far as everyone on the server (save for Technoblade and Tommy) knew, Dream was dead. Dream wanted to keep it that way.

Still, though Menoetius was a Syndicate member, he rarely participated in the meetings. He was more of a wanderer, roaming from place to place and reporting his findings to whichever Syndicate member was assigned to him that month. Which was why he was on his way to his usual meeting spot, face hidden behind a blank white mask. He checked his inventory one more time, making sure that the journal was in place, then slipped behind a tree at the edge of the clearing and went perfectly still. With his hood pulled low and the brown cloak he was wearing, he blended in with the forest.

Time ticked by. Dream remained unmoving, gaze fixed on the treeline at the other side of the clearing. About six minutes into his wait, Philza stepped out of the trees and surveyed the clearing.

“Menoetius?” he called.

Dream silently melted out of the shadows. Philza startled violently and took a step back, raising a hand to his heart. “You’re gonna give me a heart attack one day,” he joked, shaking his head. “Seriously, mate, we gotta get a bell on you or something.”

Dream grinned behind his mask, realized Philza couldn’t see his expression, and shrugged. He pulled the leather-bound journal from his inventory and crossed the clearing, holding it out to the avian hybrid. Philza took the book, opening the book to the first page and raising an eyebrow.

“Kinoko Kingdom?” he asked. “Pretty new, aren’t they? Shouldn’t be much of a threat. Why were you checking them out?”

Dream tapped the *Kingdom* written on the page. Philza shrugged and shut the journal with a snap. “Fair point.”

There was a faint caw in the distance. Philza glanced over his shoulder as the book disappeared into his inventory. “Well, I’ll be off now, mate. Techno told me to let you know that the next Syndicate meeting’s on Friday. Speaking of, you ever gonna show up for one of those?”

Dream crossed his arms and fixed Philza with a deadpan stare. The man laughed. “Just checkin’, mate. Wouldn’t hurt if you appeared sometime. You *are* a Syndicate member, after all.”

More caws, louder this time. Dream waved a dismissive hand, shaking his head. Philza shrugged. “Alright then. I’ll let Techno know.”

Dream dipped his head. Philza returned the nod, then turned to go - only to see a wave of crows rising over the treetops, hurtling full speed down towards the clearing. “What the fuck?” he got out, right before the murder descended upon them with feathery vengeance.

Dream was almost to the edge of the clearing before they got him, dragging him back to the center. He tried to pull out a shield, but the crows just wormed their way under it, pecking at it and tugging at his clothes. With no options left, he curled into a ball, trying to minimize the surface area available. Through the cacophony of crowing and screeching, he could hear Philza.

“Bad Chat! Very bad-- no, get off him what the *fuck* are you doing-- *STOP*, you little *shits*-- ”

All at once, the crows took off, funneling into the sky and disappearing into the clouds. Dream remained in a ball, unwilling to take the chance that they would return.

He looked up at the sound of footsteps in the snow. “Mate, I am *so* sorry-- I don’t *why* the fuck they did that. Are you hurt?”

Dream cautiously uncurled, shaking his head. He gingerly got to his feet, then looked down at himself and paused.

The crows had apparently left him with a wide variety of shiny baubles, riddling his cloak with safety pins and other strange knickknacks. Most of the safety pins had random trinkets strung on them - Dream could count at least five bottle caps and several pop can tabs.

He realized with a start that his hood was down and hastily moved to pull it back up, only to realize that the crows had somehow clipped the thing to the back of his cloak. With a silent sigh, he resigned himself to losing that part of his anonymity. Hopefully, his hair had grown out long enough that Philza wouldn’t recognize him by his hairstyle alone.

Philza let out an abrupt snort. Dream turned to him, questioning, and realized the other man was fighting back laughter.

“Sorry, sorry,” Philza chuckled, gesturing. “Just, uh. Uh. Look in a mirror.”

Dream raised an eyebrow and took a couple steps back, pulling out his polished netherite axe and turning it so he could see his own reflection in the blade. His hair was an absolute mess,

peppered with feathers and mismatched, cutesy hair clips. One crow had somehow managed to create a little *braid*, which stuck up from his head like a lopsided, very short horn. The white paint on his mask had been chipped away in places, with an especially unflattering expletive scratched across the forehead.

If this wasn't Tommy's fault, Dream would eat his own boot. Without salt.

Gathering his remaining dignity, he gave Philza a nod (which the man returned, still snickering) and strode away, keeping his head held high. He had just stepped into the treeline when a flash caught his eye. Turning, he found Tommy, holding a camera and grinning like a loon.

"Ey Big D," he greeted. "How you doing?"

"I am going to murder you," Dream said serenely.

Tommy's smile disappeared faster than someone could say 'oh shit'.

---

Dream was sweaty, exhausted and two hundred percent fucking done with everything. Tommy was *fast*, and though Dream was faster, he'd also been hampered by the heavy cloak he was wearing. The teenager had somehow remained unscathed through the entirety of the chase, and Dream had eventually decided to call it a day when Tommy had climbed up a tree and dumped snow onto his head.

He let out a breath of relief as his secret base (really, a cave he had repurposed into a home) came into view. Prime, he needed a shower. And then a nap. A very, very long nap.

With an exhausted sigh, Dream stepped around the numerous traps he'd set up and shifted a rock to the side with his foot, revealing a button. He gave it a quick kick, then rolled the rock back into place, turning around just as the outline of a door appeared on the wall opposite of him. Without fanfare, he shoved it open - and froze.

Every inch of horizontal surface from the furniture to the floor was covered in crows, who stopped dead in their tracks and slowly turned their heads to look at him. Their beady eyes gleamed.

Dream took a moment to regret all his life decisions, then turned on his heel and ran like hell.



[INSPIRED ART](#) BY SWEARING\_CRUMB ON INSTA :D (choose the better one - left or right? - bcs I can't decide)

**Loop Notes**

52. The SMP isn't going to have a lot of fun this loop.

54.  $\square \perp \top \vdash \mathcal{J} \mathcal{J}!; \vdash \vdash \mathcal{J} \text{ ' } \square \bar{\mathcal{K}} \parallel \perp \vdash \vdash \mathcal{J} \text{ .}$

55. Dream swears to this day that the crow perched on his chair did a full 360 with its head. He fears the Chat, and for good reason.

# Chapter 12

## Chapter Notes

I added an [encyclopedia of loops](#) where the loops that cross multiple parts/chapters are compiled together so you can easily check what happened previously in that loop. Also includes TLDRs in the summary of every chapter for people who don't want to reread everything. All multi-part loops have a link to their relevant chapter titled “see previous parts of this loop here” next to their names.

Thanks to Whyam\_Here for pointing out the problem and giving me an idea to fix it and Gabbygirl317 for suggesting that I link it to all relevant loops! :D If any of you have any suggestions for making this more efficient, please let me know.

### Spotlighted Comments

**curry\_powder:** gone are the days of frantically searching through chapters for each part of a series, of skipping around chapters to see the full picture. skimming through 11 chapters full of absolute crack, the endless abyss full of boundless words flying by bolded numbers until i at last find the label of one i am looking for.

i stare into the screen at my salvation, labelled "the encyclopedia of loops" and quietly weep tears of joy and relief.

**Artical:** Zvtlaopun’z dyvun. I like your funny words magic man.

**Random\_Internet\_Persona:** “This is all your fucking fault,” he accused. “Now Tubbo’s making fuckin’ chess metaphors.”

Dream sighed. “Tommy--”

A pawn enchanted with Knockback II sent him crashing into the wall.

\*lizard walks into frame\*

That’s great, but did you know fifteen minutes could save you 15% or more on car insurance?

**LunaticMentaly:** You got one type of Chat. Now time for the other. SUBSCRIBE TO TECHNOBLADE EEEEEEE /J

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

### 56. adoption arc, pt. 5 ( [see previous parts of this loop here](#) )

“You’re *what*?”

“Baking with Dream,” Purpled replied. “I’ll be free at four.”

“I cannot believe this,” Tommy hissed. “You’re gonna abandon me for *Dream*?”

“You’re welcome to join us,” Purpled offered dryly. “Ranboo does sometimes.”

“The *boob boy* is involved too?!” Tommy shrieked.

Purpled, who was now very used to his dramatics, simply turned away and waved a hand. “Anyways, I’ll meet you at the UFO in two hours. Might be a bit late.”

“I will remember this betrayal!” Tommy shouted at his retreating back.

---

“What exactly do you have against Dream?”

“He’s a bitch.”

“You literally run away every time he comes within ten feet of you,” Tubbo deadpanned. He set his watering can down. “I think it’s a bit more than that.”

“I’m not scared of him,” Tommy snapped. Tubbo side-eyed him. “I’m *not!*”

“If you say so, Tommy.”

There was a long moment of silence. Tubbo silently counted down the seconds until Tommy cracked.

“Okay,” Tommy grumbled just as Tubbo hit zero. “He’s-- he’s trying to adopt us.”

“Yeah, you told me.”

“I don’t want to be adopted.”

“Why not?” At Tommy’s incredulous look, Tubbo shrugged. “It’s not like a serious thing, right?”

“But it’s *Dream*.”

“You say that like it means something.”

“It *does*.”

“Then explain it to me.”

Tommy made a frustrated noise. They’d already had this exact conversation three times before, and his answer was the same every time. “It’s complicated!”

“Uh-huh,” Tubbo said dubiously, hefting his watering can and moving over to another patch of flowers in the garden. “Y’know, you can’t avoid him forever.”

Tommy bared his teeth. “*Watch* me.”

---

“Ranboob, what the fuck are you doing?”

“*Ranboo*,” Ranboo corrected. “I’m waiting for someone.”

Tommy blinked. “What? Why?”

“He’s teaching me self-defense.”

“I thought you hated fighting.”

“I do,” Ranboo assured. “But I gotta defend myself too. I’ll have to move to a different server eventually, and the people there might not be as nice to hybrids.”

Tommy grimaced. “Point. Who’s teaching you? Technoblade?”

Ranboo blinked. “Who?”

“Technoblade,” Tommy repeated, then paused. “Oh wait, bitch hasn’t joined the server yet. Sam then?”

“. . . No,” Ranboo said slowly. “Dream.”

Tommy stared at him. “*Dream?*”

“Yeah. Dream.” Ranboo shuffled his feet, gaze drifting slightly to the side. “Look, I know you don’t like him--”

“No, Ranboo, you don’t understand,” Tommy hissed. “He has *motives*. He’s gonna win your trust and then he’s gonna *adopt* you. He’s a fuckin’ bastard--”

“I know.”

Tommy stopped, taken aback. “You know?”

“I know,” Ranboo deadpanned. “Tubbo told me about your rants.”

“I will be having *words* with him,” Tommy muttered, then turned to Ranboo. “Stay away from ‘im, you hear?”

Ranboo nodded, the same way an indulgent adult would nod at a small child spouting nonsense. “Okay, Tommy.”

“I’m being serious!”

“He’s really not that bad,” Ranboo countered. “If you spend some time with him--”

“I absolutely *refuse*-- ”

“Tommy!”

Tommy shrieked as a hand landed heavily on his head, ruffling his hair. He whipped around and batted the offending appendage away, then kicked Dream in the shin for good measure. Dream simply sidestepped, letting his foot hit empty air. “Hello to you too, child. Are you here to join us?”

“I will murderize you,” Tommy promised darkly. “I will kill you until you’re dead, and then I’ll burn your body and dance on the ashes.”

“Okay,” Dream chirped, completely unbothered. He ruffled Tommy’s hair again. “Have fun.”

Tommy let out an enraged scream and lunged for his throat.

### *57. toddler tales, pt. 3 ([see previous parts of this loop here](#))*

“Why couldn’t we have done this in my office?”

“Because,” Quackity drawled, his hands folded behind his head. “Taxes are boring, and if we talked about them at your office I’d fall asleep.”

“So you dragged me out here,” Tubbo deadpanned. Quackity shrugged.

“It’s a nice day. When was the last time you saw the sun?”

“This morning.”

“Let me rephrase that. When was the last time you saw the sun without a window in the way?”

Tubbo’s silence was telling. Quackity nodded sagely. “Exactly. I get that you’re the president and you got shit to do, but you gotta take care of yourself too. Running yourself into the ground isn’t gonna help anyone.”

Tubbo sighed. “Quackity--”

There was a snap of a twig breaking. Quackity whipped his head in the direction of the sound, drawing his axe. Behind him, Tubbo pulled a sword from his inventory.

“Who’s there?” The vice president of L’Manberg demanded.

A pause. The two watched warily as the underbrush shivered, the sound of two people whispering not-so-quietly reaching their ears. And then a child tumbled out of the bushes and onto the path, bringing up his tiny fists like he was about to throw a punch. A second child shuffled out after him, giving them a wide berth.

“Wha--” Quackity spluttered, lowering his axe. “*Kids?*”

“Are you gonna kidnap us too?” the first child demanded.

Tubbo stared at him. His shock of blonde hair, his blue eyes, his voice. . .

“Tommy?” he blurted. The child gaped at him.

“*Tubbo?*” he asked. “Oh my fucking Prime, you’re ma-- mash-- massi--”

“Big,” the child hiding behind Tommy piped in.

“--big,” Tommy finished, nodding his head. Then he paused. “Wait, so the kidnapper wasn’t lying?”

“Mister Minecraft said he trus- trusted him, right?” the mystery child pointed out. “So he’s not a liar.”

Tommy whipped back around. “Why are you big?” he demanded.

“Why are you *small*?” Tubbo asked. Tommy puffed up indignantly.

“I am not *small*,” he hissed, eyes narrowing to slits. “I am the big man. The biggest man.”

“Uh,” Quackity said intelligently. “Wait. That’s, uh, that’s *Tommy?*”

“Who the fuck are you?” The toddler snapped.

“I’m-- you don’t remember me?”

“I said, *who the fuck are you?*”

“Big Q,” Tubbo muttered to his vice president. “He might-- he might not remember anything. Because. Because he’s a kid now.”

“. . . I’m Quackity,” Quackity said, crouching down. His axe disappeared into his inventory. “And who are you?”

“I’m Tommy Careful Danger Kraken Innit,” one toddler declared. “The biggest man in the world.”

There was an awkward pause as they waited for the second toddler to introduce himself. When it dragged on for a moment too long, Tommy added, “And this is--”

The second toddler hastily clapped a hand over his mouth. “Ma told me not to tell my name to strangers,” he said quickly. Then he squealed and pulled his hand away, rubbing it frantically on the sleeve of Tommy’s shirt. “You licked me!”

Tommy stuck out his tongue. “This is Dream,” he announced. “Tubbo’s not a stranger. We can trust ‘im!”

“But he’s *big* now,” Dream protested.

“Doesn’t matter how big he is, he’ll always be my friend!”

Quackity had gone still. “*Dream?*”

Dream paused. “Did. . .” he started slowly. “Did you know big-me?”

Quackity’s face twitched into something close to a grim smile. “You could say that.” His hand drifted downwards, the faint edges of an axe hilt coalescing between his fingers as he began to pull it from his inventory. Tubbo caught his wrist.

“Quackity,” he said warily. “Don’t.”

Quackity’s smile became noticeably more strained. “Wait here,” he told the children. “I just. . . gotta talk to Tubbo for a second.”

He led the president down the path, far enough that they were out of hearing range but still within view. “Tubbo,” he started. “Tubbo, Dream--”

“We’re not killing him.”

Quackity blinked, taken aback. “I-- what?”

“We’re not killing him,” Tubbo repeated, squaring his shoulders and looking him in the eyes.

“But-- but he’s vulnerable right now!” Quackity protested. “He’s a literal kid, he can’t defend himself--”

“Which is exactly why we’re not killing him.”

Quackity took a deep breath. “Tubbo, Tubbo, Tubbo. Dream is a bastard. Doesn’t matter what age he is, he’s still a war criminal. He needs to pay.”

Tubbo stood his ground. “He doesn’t remember what he did.”

“And there’s a chance he will later!” Quackity gestured in the direction of the toddlers. “You think he’s gonna stay like this forever? We got a chance, Tubbo, and we have to fucking take it!”

“Dream’s a *child*, Quackity!” Tubbo shouted back. “We’re not executing a three-year-old for shit he doesn’t even remember doing!”

“Whas’ essacuting? ”

Both men whirled around to see the two toddlers, now standing only a few feet away. Dream was half-hiding behind Tommy, eyes round and face pale. Tommy himself was glaring up at Quackity, arms crossed over his chest.

“. . . Didn’t I tell you to wait over there?” Quackity asked.

Tommy scoffed. “Like I’m gonna listen to you. What’s essacuting?”

“Executing,” Dream corrected quietly. “We did it back home. It means making someone sleep f-forever.”

Tommy frowned. “Like. . . Mister Minecraft does to the zombies? With his sword?”

Dream nodded. Tommy turned to the older two. “You’re. . . you’re gonna hurt Dream?”

“Tommy,” Quackity said, “Dream-- Big-Dream, he isn’t a good person. You gotta get that.”

“No,” Tommy snapped. He pointed a chubby finger at Quackity. “Dream is my friend. I don’t care what the fuck big-Dream did. Hurt ‘im and I’ll hurt you.”

“You don’t understand,” Quackity insisted. He drew his axe and stepped towards the two children. Tommy took a step back - right into Dream, who had frozen in place.

“I don’t wanna die,” the child whispered, green eyes wide with terror.

Quackity faltered. Tommy took that moment to grab Dream and *bolt*, short legs sprinting down the path. Tubbo half-turned in pursuit, only to stop, watching them go with a conflicted expression. By the time Quackity had recovered enough to start after them, they were already out of sight, hidden by the undergrowth surrounding the path.

“Quackity,” Tubbo called after his vice president. “Quackity, stop.”

Quackity skidded to a stop, glaring in the direction the children had disappeared in. “We have a *chance*, Tubbo,” he snapped. “L’Manberg can finally be free.”

“At the cost of a child’s life.”

“He’s not a child!”

Tubbo crossed his arms. “Quackity. As your president, I’m ordering you. Stop.”

“And as your vice president, I’m telling you that it’s for the greater good,” Quackity grumbled, but he lowered his axe and let it dematerialize into his inventory.

“Do you *want* to trauma-- traumatize Tommy?” Tubbo demanded. His voice cracked, and he cleared his throat. He could have a crisis about this later. “He’s a *toddler*, Quackity.”

“He’ll thank us when he turns back.”

“That’s the thing, Quackity. We don’t know if he will.”

“. . . There’s gotta be *some* way, Tubbo--”

“And we don’t know if Dream will turn back either,” Tubbo interrupted. “Yeah, he might, but what if he doesn’t? You’ll risk killing an innocent kid?”

“It’s for the greater good,” Quackity repeated. He sounded more like he was trying to convince himself. Tubbo shook his head.



“You could kill Dream,” he said quietly. His scars ached. “But then we’d be no better than Schlatt.”

Quackity remained silent.

“Think about it, big Q,” Tubbo murmured, then turned on his heel and walked away.

He wasn’t exactly on the best terms with Philza, but Dream had mentioned a ‘Mister Minecraft’. Hopefully, he had some idea of what had happened to Tommy - and more importantly, how to fix it.

## 58. *(credit to TheWritingNightOwl)*

“How the fuck did I get here?”

“Shush,” Tommy ordered, studying the giant chessboard with narrowed eyes. Wilbur grumbled something unfavorable and fell silent.

“You know,” Technoblade drawled. “I could just knock out Philza. He’s standing *right there*.”

“How about you *don’t* knock out Philza,” Philza suggested, eyeing him warily. Tommy snapped his fingers.

“Great idea. D4 Knight to B3.”

“Noooo,” Philza protested as Technoblade stepped across the grid in an L-shaped path.

“Technoblade, Techno, we can talk about this--”

“I’m sorry, Phil,” Technoblade said grimly. He hefted Philza over his shoulder, marched to the edge of the board, and dumped him on the ground. Philza pouted, but when Technoblade raised an eyebrow at him, it morphed into a grin.

“Good luck out there,” he said. Technoblade offered him a noncommittal nod and returned to his place on the board.

“My turn,” Dream declared. “Rook to D5.”

Schlatt blinked blearily down at the bottle in his hand and did not move. Dream sighed.

“Sapnap?”

Sapnap obligingly moved two squares over, grabbed Schlatt by the shoulders and steered him onto square D5 before he returned to his original spot. Tommy blinked. D5 was directly in Tubbo's path, and even as he scanned the board, Tommy could see that no other pieces were in a position to take D5 if Tommy took out Schlatt. It wasn't a trap - it was a useless sacrifice, plain and simple.

“Uh, Dream.”

“I know,” the other man deadpanned. “I did that on purpose.”

A pause. Tommy glanced at Tubbo, who was staring at him with wide, pleading eyes.

“Okay, what the hell. Queen to D5. Go wild.”

Tubbo whooped, crossing the distance between him and Schlatt. He stopped in front of the man, frowning contemplatively, then shrugged and punched him in the face. Schlatt went down like a bowling pin.

“I wanted to do that,” Wilbur muttered petulantly. Technoblade snorted, taking a step back as Tubbo dragged Schlatt’s prone form past him.

“Nice right hook,” he said. Tubbo beamed.

“Thanks, I’ve been practicing!”

“. . . H5 Bishop to F3,” Dream called. Niki surveyed the board, gaze landing on Wilbur, who stood right in her path.

“. . . No,” Wilbur said.

“Sorry, Wil,” Nikki chirped. She slid onto the square. “But there’s only room for one of us here.”

“Join us,” Karl (one of Tommy’s bishops) called from the sidelines, where he, Philza (one of Dream’s bishops), and Callahan (Dream’s second rook, with Schlatt being the first) were locked in an intense game of Monopoly beside Schlatt’s unconscious body. “We have Monopoly.”

“Capitalism,” Wilbur grumbled, but he moved off the board to join them.

“C4 Pawn to C5,” Tommy declared. “Tubbo, could you--?”

“On it, big man.” Tubbo hopped back a square, nudging the dirt block that represented a pawn forward before returning to his spot. “Done!”

Dream hesitated, surveying the board. “. . . Queen to B3.”

Technoblade glanced down at square B3, which he was standing on, then up at Dream. “Really?” he deadpanned.

Dream shrugged. “You took out Philza. He must be avenged.”

“Can’t avenge him if your Queen is asleep.”

Dream glanced down at George, who was dozing peacefully in his square. “. . . You have a point. Scratch that, F6 bishop to G4.”

Jack Manifold strode onto G4 and unceremoniously kicked the dirt block occupying it off the board. It flew straight into Wilbur, who went down in a flurry of Monopoly money and cursing. "Sorry," Jack called, not sounding very sorry at all. He turned to Niki. "Hello."

"Hello," Niki replied with a smile.

"And goodbye," Fundy declared, stepping onto Niki's square. At Niki's betrayed look, he shrugged. "Sorry, Niki. Orders are orders."

Niki sighed mournfully but retreated, joining the little circle of people sitting around the monopoly board. Dream pressed his lips together.

"Knight to C7."

Sapnap glanced at Punz. "Which one?"

"Uh- Punz, sorry. Should've clarified that."

"Can I go to F4?" Fundy called. "I want to go to F4."

"Why?" Tommy shouted back.

Fundy gestured at the pawn on F4, then mimed kicking something in Wilbur's direction. Tommy grinned.

"F3 rook to F4."

Fundy whooped, hopping onto the square. He eyed the dirt block for a moment, taking a step back and lining up his shot. Then he drew back his foot and kicked it. The block sailed through the air in a perfect arc, landing right on Wilbur's head.

"Score!" Fundy cheered as Wilbur faceplanted on the monopoly board.

## 59.

Dream thrived off of physical contact; it was a well-known fact among the inhabitants of the server. He enjoyed tussling with his friends, engaging in mock fights or throwing an arm around their shoulders while they talked. He was constantly in motion, running this way and that, taking glee in sparring and engaging in the occasional race. Sam had grown used to his animated gesturing and inexhaustible supply of energy, to being greeted with an enthusiastic wave and a cheerful shout of his name.

But one morning Dream woke up, and he was *different*. His eyes were suddenly ages older than they had been the day before. He adopted a shuffling walk and constantly hunched in on himself. He'd space out a lot too, gazing into the distance with an unreadable expression. Occasionally he'd look down at his hands and stare like he'd never seen them before.

The worst part, though, was the wariness. He no longer drew his friends into side hugs, and avoided as much physical contact as he could. He'd stiffen up every time someone came near him. On particularly bad days, he couldn't even look them in the eye. His mask was almost constantly over his face now, and he'd go still whenever one of them drew a weapon, watching them like he was about to be attacked.

He was wary of the others, but he was *terrified* of Sam. Sam didn't know why, but every time they spoke, he could hear the slight tremor in Dream's voice. The man tried to put up a front, to act relaxed around him, but he couldn't hide his shaking hands or the way he flinched every time Sam made a sudden movement.

*(Sam kicked the last spider corpse away, grimacing at the grime covering his sword. When he'd gone mining, he hadn't expected to run into a nest of cave spiders. Thankfully, Dream had been with him. Between the two of them, they'd managed to defeat the spiders with nothing worse than a few bruises. The creeper hybrid turned to Dream, who was staring down at a spider corpse with empty fascination. His hand was clenched tightly around the hilt of his sword.)*

*Sam recognized that blank look. "Dream."*

*Dream didn't react. Sam stepped closer. "Dream, can you hear me?"*

*Silence. Sam cautiously reached out.*

*Dream jerked, head snapping towards him. Sam reared backwards, surprised at the sudden motion. Dream's eyes tracked his movement, landing on his raised hand. He stiffened up, joints locking, and when Sam hastily lowered his hand, he cried out and physically threw himself away.*

*"I'm sorry!" he shrieked, curling into the wall of the cave as if he was trying to disappear into it. "I'm sorry! Please, please, no--"*

*"It's me," Sam pleaded, kneeling down and setting his hands flat against the ground. "It's me, Dream. Sam. Your- your friend. We're in a cave right now. We were mining. Can you hear me? Dream, can you hear me?"*

*"No," Dream whispered. It was obvious that he wasn't seeing Sam at the moment. "Please, I just-- I want to go outside-- please, I haven't seen the sun in years--"*

*"You're not there, Dream. You're safe. The others are waiting for us back at the Community House. George, Callahan, Alyssa. Remember them? You're safe, Dream. I'm not going to hurt you."*

*"Please just let me out," Dream begged. "Please."*

*"You're out, Dream. You're free."*

*"Please. Just-- just five minutes, please--"*

*“You’re free, Dream. You’re safe. We’re in a cave. We were mining. The others are waiting for us at the Community House.”*

*“No, no, no, no-- ”)*

After that incident, Sam was very careful to always keep his hands below shoulder level around Dream.

It wasn't just Sam, either. Whenever Sapnap spoke, Dream would jerk like he was about to take off running. He was jittery and anxious, constantly fidgeting around the other man and refusing to relax until he moved away.

*(“He thinks I’m gonna kill him,” Sapnap muttered into the mug in his hands. “I don’t know why. But every time I get near him he just-- freezes. Like he’s-- like I’m gonna pull out a fucking axe and take his head off.”*

*Sam took a sip of his hot chocolate and said nothing. Sapnap laughed bitterly.*

*“And it’s just me,” he said. “I’ve seen him sparring with George, and he’s fine. But the moment I get near him, the way he looks at me-- ”)*

Dream tried to hide the change. By *Prime*, he tried to hide the change, forcing himself to spend time with his friends when he was clearly uncomfortable. At first, the group did their best to be supportive, giving him space and time in the hopes that he would begin feeling comfortable around them. But he only grew worse, becoming twitchier by the day. Things eventually reached a head and the group unanimously decided that an intervention was needed.

*(“Okay,” Alyssa said, hands folded on the table in front of her. “Obviously, Dream isn’t going to take care of himself.”*

*A round of quiet assents. Alyssa waited until they died down before continuing.*

*“That being said, we can’t just gang up on him and tell him to stop spending time with us. Do we all understand that?”*

*Another round of assents. Alyssa nodded. “So. How are we going to do this?”*

*“Maybe only with one or two people,” Sam said. He bit his lip. “Not. . . not me or Sapnap.” He sent the other an apologetic look, but Sapnap just nodded. He understood.*

*Callahan signed rapidly to Alyssa. “He says it’s a good idea,” she translated. “If there are too many people, he might feel threatened or trapped.”*

*There was a moment of solemn silence. Ponk cleared his throat. “Does. . . does anyone know what happened?”*

*A low round of negatives. “And we’re not going to try to find out,” BadBoyHalo added. “He’ll tell us when. . . if he’s comfortable.”*

*“I . . I think George should do it.”*

*George’s gaze snapped to Sapnap. He pointed at himself. “Wha-- me? Why me?”*

*“He seems to be the most comfortable around you, Callahan and Alyssa.”*

*“Then why not Callahan or Alyssa?”*

*Callahan and Alyssa exchanged looks. “He’s kind of . . distant around us,” Alyssa explained. “Standoffish. You’re the one he’s most open to.”*

*George blinked. “I am?”*

*“You are,” Sam confirmed dryly. George took a deep breath, pushing his goggles up to rub his eyes.*

*“Okay,” he said. “Okay, I’ll do it.”*

*The intervention had gone. . . surprisingly well. Dream requested space, and his friends gladly gave it to him.*

*(“--just saying,” Sapnap insisted. “It would look a whole lot better--”*

*“We’re not putting TNT in the community house,” Sam said firmly. “Even if it’s ‘just for decoration’.”*

*“But--”*

*Sam sped up. “No, Sapnap. That’s final.”*

*Sapnap scowled, hurrying to match the creeper hybrid’s long strides. “Fine. Spoilsport.”*

*They crested the top of the hill, only to pause when they caught sight of Dream. The man was standing with his back to them. His arms were flung out wide at his sides, head tilted back. His mask was laying in the grass by his feet. He was motionless, silent, face upturned towards the sky and relishing in the wind as it ran through his hair.*

*Sapnap and Sam exchanged glances, then quietly retreated. They could argue about internal decoration elsewhere.)*

*Two weeks later, Dream appeared at Sam’s house in the middle of the night.*

*(Sam blinked. “Dream? What are you doing here?”*

*“Hey, Sam,” Dream greeted, looking everywhere but his face. “I . . can we talk?”*

*Sam pushed down his unease and stepped aside. “Sure, come on in. Do you want some. . . tea, or something?”*

*“N-no thanks,” Dream managed, eyes darting to the threshold of Sam’s house. “I . . I . .”*

*Sam waited patiently for him to gather his thoughts. Dream took a deep breath and collected himself, straightening a bit.*

*“Could we talk outside?” he asked. “I . . . don’t do well in. In enclosed spaces.”*

*“Of course,” Sam said immediately, stepping out. He left the door ajar. “Where do you want to go?”*

*“H-here is fine.” Dream hesitantly sat down in the grass, still determinedly not looking at Sam. Sam quickly copied him. “I . . . um, I wanted to apologize.”*

*Sam blinked. “Apologize? For what?”*

*“For. For, uh.” Dream made a frustrated noise, hands tearing at the grass. “I’m not scared of you, Sam, but I keep-- keep flinching and stuff-- I-- I don’t want you to get the wrong idea--”*

*“Dream. Take deep breaths. You’re okay.”*

*Dream ducked his head. “Yeah, okay. I’m. I’m okay. I’m good.”*

*They sat in silence for a couple minutes, listening to the crickets.*

*“I know you’re not scared of me,” Sam said gently. Dream jerked in surprise. “But you don’t have to. . . to talk with me if you’re uncomfortable. I won’t be hurt.”*

*But Dream was shaking his head. “I want to talk with you,” he insisted. “You just. . . you just remind me of someone else.”*

*Sam paused, running that statement through his head. “Then is there any way I can. . . remind you less?”*

*“I don’t want you to change.”*

*“Dream, you’re my friend. I want you to feel safe, and if it means changing my appearance, I’ll gladly do it.”*

*Dream hesitated, plucking a blade of grass. Sam watched as he tore it to shreds, letting him think for a long moment.*

*“. . . I know it’s weird, but. . . but could you. . . hide your armor somehow? I’m not asking you to stop wearing it,” Dream added hastily, “just. . . wear it under a. . . a shirt or tunic or something over it? You-- the other S-- other person was always wearing-- always wearing full netherite.”*

*“I can do that,” Sam said, already running through his closet in his head. He probably had a couple of shirts that were loose enough to fit over his armor. “Anything else?”*

*Dream bit his lip. “Your. . . mask looks a lot like his.”*

*Sam blinked, hands automatically coming up to touch his gas mask. He couldn't exactly go around without it, but there were other ways to adjust its appearance. He could paint it, change up the color scheme. Maybe a nice shade of bronze? He made a mental note to ask Ponk for ideas.*

*He realized belatedly that he hadn't replied to Dream. The other man had tensed up, white-tipped fingers crushing a single blade of grass. "Yeah," Sam assured quickly. "I can paint it or something. Been wanting to try a different color for a while now."*

*Dream's fingers slowly relaxed, releasing the blade of grass.. ". . . Thanks," he said quietly. He still wasn't looking at Sam, but the slant of his shoulders had softened.*

*Progress. Sam smiled warmly, his eyes crinkling into crescents. "Anytime.")*

The healing process was slow. It took weeks for Dream to come out of seclusion. When he did, he stayed on the fringes of the group, content to remain out of the center of attention. The others didn't treat him any differently, accepting him as he was and backing off when he appeared to be too overwhelmed.

Slowly, he began to open up. It was visible in the small things-- when he let them see his face every so often, when he didn't flinch away from an accidental brush of the shoulders. When he was finally able to look Sam in the eyes, and smile at him without a hint of fear.

Sam didn't know what had happened to Dream. None of them did. But they were his friends, and they were going to support him every step of the way.

## **60. (credit to Thinkingisoverrated)**

George yawned, sitting up in the bed. He blinked blearily against the sunlight, rubbing his eyes and squinting at the window. Based on the position of the sun, it was probably around 10 in the morning.

He pulled the covers off and made to stand, only to pause and stare at the floor. The floor, which had been entirely replaced with slime blocks.

George calmly rolled back into bed. He wasn't awake enough to deal with this.

---

"TOMMY!"

"WHAT?"

"WHY THE HELL IS THE FLOOR MADE OUT OF SLIME?!"



“WHY THE FUCK ARE YOU ASKING ME?!”

Wilbur pinched the bridge of his nose. “Tommy--”

“The AUDACITY,” Tommy continued, pressing a hand to his chest. “You really think--”

“Tommy.”

“--I would vandalize our great nation of L’Manberg like this? I’m the fucking VICE PRESIDENT, Wil--”

“ *Tommy.* ”

“--this is just downright disrespectful--”

“There is literally a fucking *sign*, ” Wilbur snapped, jabbing a finger at said sign, “with ‘big man TombyInnit’-- and I don’t know *how* the fuck you misspelled your own name-- ‘wuz here’, on top of a pile of slime blocks.”

“I was framed,” Tommy sniffed. “This is obviously Dream’s fault.”

Wilbur closed his eyes and took a deep breath. Calm. He was the epitome of calm. He couldn’t murder his vice president, it would be bad for publicity. “Tommy,” he began.

“Nuh-uh,” Tommy snapped. He jabbed a finger at Wilbur. “I’m not gonna stand here and listen to you accuse me of crimes I definitely didn’t commit. Either apologize or fuck off.”

Okay, screw being calm. Wilbur was going to murder the gremlin, publicity be damned.

---

“How.”

Eret glanced down at his shoes. “Practice.”

“You practiced walking on slime blocks in five-inch platform heels,” Fundy deadpanned.

“It makes it easier to walk on normal blocks.”

“Did you practice walking on ice too?”

Eret blinked. “That’s. . . a great idea, actually. Let’s go find some ice--”

“Eret, that wasn’t a challenge--”

“--and hope I don’t break an ankle again.’

Fundy paused. “. . . Again?”

Eret hummed noncommittally and began strolling away.

“Wait-- Eret, wait what do you mean *again?!?*”

---

“THIS IS THE BEST DAY OF MY LIFE!”

“Glad one of us is having fun,” Sapnap grumbled, warily inching forward. Karl whooped and leapt off the tree, bouncing off the slime blocks and doing a backflip midair.

“You’re the only one *not* having fun,” Quackity pointed out. He jumped into the air and splayed out like a starfish, landing with an *oomph* on the slime blocks and bouncing right off. Sapnap scowled at him.

“I had plans for today, but then some fucker replaced the ground with *slime blocks!*”

“Relaaaax,” Quackity wheedled, peeling himself off the ground and sidling up to him. “That rage can’t be good for your blood pressure.”

Sapnap scowled and stepped away, somehow keeping his footing on the slippery blocks. “Stay away from me. You’re covered in slime.”

A glint appeared in Quackity’s eye. “What, scared of a little slime?”

“No,” Sapnap snapped, pointedly moving back. Quackity took another step forward. “Stop, Quackity. Stay the fuck away--”

“Come here, Sapnap. Lemme give you a hug--”

“I said stay *away*-- ”

Quackity lunged. Sapnap tried to dodge, but his feet slipped out from under him. He rebounded off the slime blocks and slammed right into Quackity, sending them to the ground in a tangle of limbs.

They lay there for a long moment. In the distance, Karl catapulted himself off another tree, screaming with joy. Sapnap sighed.

“I want a divorce.”

“We’re not married, dumbass.”

Someone said that I don't update much so I updated out of spite /j /lh

(To be fair they're right-- my update schedule is very all over the place and has slowed down recently ahaha sorry about that)

This chapter fought me the entire way so I apologize if it's kinda,,, cringe I need to work on getting into the right mindset for crack--

Also: new inspired fic! It's a timeloop series too (but with discduo AND tubbo), so if you like this one then give it a look (^^)

### **Loop Notes**

**58.** Wilbur was very salty about the whole affair. He did feel better after dropping a dirt block on Schlatt's face, though.

**59.** Occurs fairly early in the loops. Five prison loops straight, and a jailbreak that Sapnap foiled via stabbing Dream. Waking up in a loop where they were still friends was. . . jarring. He's rather distant around Callahan and Alyssa because they disappeared fairly early into the server's history. George, however, was the one person that stuck around (even if he was asleep most of the time) and didn't hurt him (though he didn't help him, either) - thus, he's the most open to him.

**60.** And so they got married, just so they could get divorced.

# Chapter 13

## Chapter Notes

Clarification: this fic isn't part of the Infinite Loops project or in the same universe. There's no hub loops, fused loops, Yggdrasil, etc.

### **Spotlighted Comment: Kira\_da\_Koi**

Dream: I'm gonna adopt all the minors on the server.

Tommy:...and I took that personally.

While in the Toddler loop-

Toddler Dream: \*trying to stay alive while all his enemies realize he's weak and could easily be killed\*

Toddler Tommy: I've only had Dream for a like a day but if anything happens to him I will burn this server to the ground.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

### **61. (*inspired by YHN017*)**

"I didn't know you liked scarves."

Dream looked up, raising an eyebrow at Sapnap. "I don't."

". . . But you're wearing one right now."

Dream glanced down at the furry grey scarf draped around his neck. "Oh, Big T? He's not a scarf. He's my emotional support raccoon."

Said raccoon opened its eyes and proceeded to fix him with a glare that would have sent lesser men running for their lives. Sapnap laughed nervously and took a step back.

"Oh, uh, my bad. Sorry. Thought it was a scarf from the angle."

"He doesn't like being called a scarf," Dream warned. The raccoon bared its teeth in a fanged grin, beady eyes fixing on Sapnap's neck.

Sapnap decided that a tactical retreat was in order, gave Dream a hasty goodbye, and did exactly that.

---

“So he’s missing.”

“Yes,” Wilbur said impatiently. “Yes, he is. So have you seen him?”

Dream hummed. “Can’t say I have, sorry.” He looked down at the - was that a *goose*? - standing dutifully by his feet. “Destroyer, have you seen Tommy?”

The goose honked and shook its head. “What the fuck,” said Wilbur.

“Ah, I haven’t introduced you yet.” Dream patted the goose on its head, ignoring it when it tried to bite his fingers off. “Destroyer, this is Wilbur. Wilbur, this is Destroyer, my emotional support goose.”

Wilbur had many, many questions. The foremost being: “Why the fuck is it named ‘Destroyer’?”

“Because he is the destroyer of humanity’s hopes and dreams,” Dream said sagely. The destroyer of humanity’s hopes and dreams in question reared backward, spreading its wings wide and honking aggressively. Wilbur took a step back as it advanced, its webbed feet slapping menacingly against the wooden pathway.

“Why is he doing that?”

“Doing what?” Dream asked, apparently finding nothing wrong with the goose’s posturing. Wilbur gestured at the goose as it took another step forward.

*“That.”*

Dream shrugged. “Oh, he probably wants to bite you. I’d suggest running.”

The goose abruptly snapped its wings shut and barreled full speed towards Wilbur. Wilbur couldn’t stop the instinctive shriek of fear that rose in his throat, and within seconds he was off, bolting down the path with an angry goose hot on his heels.

Dream grinned.

---

“This is Rat.”

“You can’t just steal my dog’s name,” Bad protested.

Dream shrugged. “Rat is just your dog’s nickname, she doesn’t need it. And my Rat is an actual rat.”

“Okay. One, Rat had the name first, so obviously it should be hers. Two. . . that’s a hamster, Dream.”

Dream let out an offended gasp, clutching his emotional support hamster to his chest. “How could you hurt his feelings like that?! Calling him a *hamster*?!”

The hamster bared its teeth at Bad and let out a very un-hamster-like hiss. Dream patted it on the head. “You’re a rat, Rat. Don’t listen to Bad, he’s a meanie.”

“But that’s a *hamster*,” Bad protested. At the twin appalled looks he received, he threw his hands up into the air. “Okay, fine, he’s a rat! My point about the name stands.”

Dream drew himself up to his full height (which was still a couple feet short of Bad’s) and glared at him. “He’s a rat. Therefore, his name is Rat. Nickname your dog Dog, or something.”

“. . . Why don’t they share the name?” Bad suggested. The hamst-- sorry, *rat* hissed again. Dream shook his head.

“Rat’s very territorial,” he said. “He doesn’t share.”

Bad looked up to the heavens and wondered what he’d done to deserve this.

---

“What the fuck is that,” Fundy shrieked. “*What the fuck is that.*”

Dream turned to him. “Oh hey, Fundy.”

“Don’t ‘hey Fundy’ me!” Fundy screeched. “*Why the fuck is there a giant lizard on the roof of the White House?!*”

“He’s not a lizard.”

“*THEN WHAT THE FUCK IS IT?!*”

“Toom, my emotional support ender dragon.”

Fundy looked torn between hysterical laughter and screaming. Dream patted him on the shoulder, then turned to watch as Tommy, currently a dragon, punted Schlatt off the roof for the fifth time in a row.

---

“So which one was your favorite?”

“The dragon,” Tommy said instantly. “Probably the goose second, cause of flight and shit, but definitely the dragon. Everyone else was so fuckin’ *small*.”

Dream grinned. “Did you enjoy drop-kicking Schlatt?”

“*Hell* yes,” Tommy declared. “It was very the-- theor-- theorputic.”

“Therapeutic.”

“That’s what I said.”

“Uh-huh.” Dream eyed the potion bottles lined up on the table in front of him. “Well, new loop, so it’s my turn to be the emotional support. What did you make?”

“Salmon, cat, rabbit, parrot,” Tommy rattled off, tapping each potion as he named them. He tapped the fifth, empty bottle. “And ender dragon, if we can get some scales again.”

“Which would be difficult,” Dream mused, “since we got really lucky last time. We started at a later time this loop. XD will be more active.”

A contemplative silence fell over them. Tommy turned the bottle over in his hands, then looked up at Dream. “Hey, big D. We never tried any hostile mobs besides the ender dragon, did we?”

Dream straightened. “. . . You think that would work?”

“Only one way to find out. How d’you feel about being a ghost?”

Dream’s devious grin was answer enough.

## 62. (*credit to Smallest*)

“And the winner of the L’Manberg presidential election is. . .” Wilbur’s smile slid off his face. “. . . Technoblade?”

“What?” Quackity asked.

“*What?*” Schlatt demanded.

“Bruhhh,” Technoblade added from the audience.

Wilbur squinted at the poll results, looking appropriately bewildered. “I. . . this can’t be right. Who counted the ballots?”

“Wait one fucking second,” Schlatt ordered, hurrying to the front of the stage. He snatched the paper from Wilbur. “. . . Sixty-nine percent? What the *fuck*?”

“But Technoblade didn’t even *run*!” Fundy cried. “How the hell did he win?!”

“See, this is what I’m tellin’ you,” Technoblade called. “This is why governments never work out. Voter fraud.”

“I mean, voter fraud or not, he still won the election,” Tommy said. He shrugged. “L’Manberg needs a president, and we might as well instate him while we investigate whatever the fuck happened with the vote.”

“We are not swearing in an *anarchist* as president, Tommy,” Wilbur snapped. He ran a hand through his hair, then stalked over to snatch the paper back from Schlatt. “Give me that. Okay, who won second-- *Dream?!?*”

Tommy peered over his shoulder and whistled. “With forty-two percent of the votes, too. We had a huge voter turnout.”

“Okay, there is no way a hundred and eleven percent of our citizens--”

“--a hundred and fifty, actually, ‘cause Coconut 2020 got 39% of the vote--”

“--not the *point*, Tommy. There’s no way a hundred and eleven percent of our citizens voted for parties that *weren’t even on the ballot*. Unless some fuckers voted twice for some Primeforsaken reason, but-- seriously, what the *fuck?*”

Tommy shrugged. “The people have spoken, Wilbur. Techno’s gonna be the president. Technoblade!”

“I did not consent to this,” Technoblade deadpanned.

“You don’t get a choice,” Tommy replied cheerily. “But think of it this way! When you become president, you can officially dissolve the government!”

An unholy gleam appeared in Technoblade’s eyes. He rose to his feet.

“Tommy,” Wilbur hissed. “Tommy, *what the fuck are you doing.*”

Tommy shrugged. “Just giving him some incentive to take office.”

“We don’t *want* him to take office, Tommy.”

“Sure we do. He’ll make a great president.”

“He’s an anarchist. His party is literally called ‘ANARCHY2020’.”

Tommy looked Wilbur in the eye. “A. Great. President,” he repeated slowly.

Wilbur threw his hands into the air. “He doesn’t even have a vice!”

“Sure he does!” Tommy plucked the paper from Wilbur’s grasp and tapped the name written beside Technoblade’s. “See? Philza Minecraft!”

“Who isn’t even on the fucking server!”



“So? Your point?”

Wilbur made an incomprehensible noise of frustration.

**63.** *toddler tales, pt. 4 (inspired by Gamergamer) ([see previous parts of this loop here](#))*

There was a small child stalking Puffy.

Not that the small child knew that she knew he was stalking her. She was careful not to react whenever the sound of a branch snapping or childish giggles reached her ears. Occasionally, she did sneak a glance, catching a flash of brown hair and viridian eyes before they disappeared back into the foliage.

She bit back a smile as another twig snapped. All sound instantly ceased, as if the child had frozen, before slowly resuming when Puffy merely continued to stroll unbothered down the path. A low, hissing conversation started behind her, and when she glanced back, she caught sight of a pair of blue eyes before they vanished with an ‘eep’.

Correction: there were *two* small children stalking Puffy.

Puffy dearly wanted to hunt down Dream and demand to know *why* he thought inviting two *toddlers* to a server like this was a good idea. Unfortunately, nobody had seen Dream in nearly a month. Puffy would have to settle for protecting the kids until he reappeared again.

She hummed thoughtfully. The children had been following her for nearly twenty minutes, and appeared to have no intention of revealing themselves. With that in mind, she sped up, slipped around a bend in the path, then stepped into the foliage. With experienced movements, she padded silently across the forest floor, heading towards the hushed, ongoing conversation.

The two children came into view. Puffy let out a quiet huff of air at the sight of them. Prime, they were *tiny*.

“Where’d she go?” the one wearing an oversized dress shirt and brown cloak hissed.

“How the fuck would I know?” the other one snapped. He, too, was sporting an oversized shirt, the rolled-up sleeves dragging on the ground. Puffy cleared her throat.

Both children whipped around, eyes widening to the size of dinner plates. “Hello,” Puffy said.

“Hi,” the smaller one squeaked. “Please don’t kill me.”

Puffy’s smile dropped. Oh, she would be having *words* with whoever hurt this kid. “I’m not going to hurt you,” she promised, crouching down. “What’re your names?”

Both children remained silent, staring mistrustfully at her. Puffy smiled slightly. Not giving their names to strangers-- smart.

“Here, I’ll go first. My name’s Puffy. Are your parents nearby?”

The child with green eyes - Puffy just decided to dub him Green until she figured out his name - shook his head. The other child - Blue - puffed up, his chubby face twisting into a scowl.

“Whas’ it to you?” he demanded. “You gonna kidnap us too?”

Okay, forget having words. Puffy would be *stabbing* whoever kidnapped these two. Were they stolen from another server? Their parents must be worried out of their minds.

“I just want to help you find your parents again,” she soothed. “How did you get onto this server?”

A pause. “. . . The kidnapper said we were in the future,” Blue said slowly.

Green peeked out from behind Blue. “He said we got turned into kids.”

Puffy blinked slowly. “Got. . . turned into kids?” Green nodded silently.

“My name is Tommy,” Blue blurted impulsively. He paused, then ducked his head. “TommyInnit.”

If Puffy wasn’t already crouching, she’d probably have fallen over. “Oh,” she said blankly. “I . . . that explains a lot, actually.”

Blue-- *Tommy* watched her warily, legs half-bent as though he was ready to run at a moment’s notice. Puffy forced herself to smile. “I know you,” she told the child. “You’re a good kid. Bit chaotic, but everyone loves you.” The last part was a bit of a stretch, but toddler Tommy didn’t need to know that.

“Really?” Tommy asked, his eyes narrowed. “What about Dream?”

Puffy’s mouth went dry. “Dream?” she asked. Green startled and shrunk behind Tommy. Puffy stared at him.

Oh. Oh Prime.

The other kid was *Dream*. Whoever they’d last run into had probably tried to kill him, given that they were near L’Manberg territory. Puffy forced herself to smile.

“Dream wasn’t. . . friends with a lot of people,” she said delicately. “He did some things that some people didn’t like.”

“Are you one of ‘em?” Tommy demanded. Puffy shook her head.

“He’s my duckling,” she said. At the confused looks she received, she added, “My friend. It’s an inside joke, because I mother-hen him a lot.”

Dream blinked. “Oh.” He shifted uncomfortably. “Um. Can you. . . can you hide us?”

Tommy's head whipped around. “*Dream!*” he hissed, then clapped his hands over his mouth and glanced at Puffy.

Puffy grinned. “It’s okay, kid. I promised I wouldn't hurt you, and Dream and I are-- were good friends.”

Tommy eyed her suspiciously but relaxed slightly, lowering his hands. “Dream,” he whispered. “Dream, we can’t trust ‘er.”

“But I’m hungry,” Dream whispered back. As if on cue, his stomach growled. “I dun’ wanna keep running forever.”

Tommy looked between Puffy and Dream, clearly torn. Puffy waited patiently, keeping a gentle smile on her face. After several tense seconds, Tommy finally caved.

“Fine,” he snapped. He jabbed a finger at Puffy. “But-- but if you try to--”

“I won’t,” Puffy swore. “I promise.”

Tommy squinted at her like he was assessing her trustworthiness. At last he nodded sharply, crossing his arms.

“Okay,” he agreed, with all the pomp and self-importance of a king bestowing amnesty upon his subjects. “Now take us to the food.”

#### **64.** *the adventures of dreaxter, pt. 6* ([see previous parts of this loop here](#))

“SAM!” Sapnap shouted. He kicked the portal frame. “I KNOW YOU CAN HEAR US!”

George sighed. “Sapnap, that’s not going to work.”

“SAM, YOU FUCKING COWARD! ANSWER ME!”

“*What are you doing?*” Both men jolted, spinning around to see Dreaxter floating through the wall. The ghost was covered in a fine coating of glitter, flakes occasionally drifting to the floor. He glanced at the portal frame, then back at Sapnap. “*Why are you yelling at a wall?*”

“It’s a portal,” Sapnap answered. “Currently deactivated, because the wARDEN IS TOO SCARED TO GIVE ME SOME FUCKING ANSWERS!”

Dreaxter watched curiously as Sapnap kicked the portal frame again. “*I can go look for him if you want,*” he offered. “*The walls don’t stop me.*”

Sapnap paused, studying him with an unreadable gaze. He glanced at George, who shrugged, then looked back to Dream.

“I don’t know,” he began. “You. . . it might bring up some bad memories.”

Dreaxter shook his head. *"I've been all over the server and I haven't remembered anything new,"* he assured. *"I'm sure it'll be fine!"*

He moved towards the portal, only for Sapnap to step in his way. "Are you sure about this?" he asked seriously. Dream nodded.

*"Mhm! Don't worry, I'll let Sam know that you wanna talk."*

And then he was gone, disappearing into the wall behind the empty portal frame.

---

*"Woahhhh,"* Dream muttered, running an incorporeal hand over the redstone contraption and leaving a trail of glitter behind. He'd seen the inner workings of Pandora's Vault maybe only two or three times before, and they amazed him every time. Heck, he'd probably even have dedicated several loops to studying it if he didn't have so much bad history with this place.

Turning away, he poked his head through another wall, grimacing when he realized he was overlooking the moat. *"Wrong way,"* he muttered, retreating back into the building and glancing around. *"Hmm. . ."*

He floated over to another wall and stuck his head through, grinning triumphantly when he came out into a hallway. Perfect! Now he just needed to figure out *which* hallway.

Gliding down the hall and through a locked door, he found a spiral staircase. Dream ran the prison blueprints through his head. Okay, so he was on the second floor. He had no idea where Sam was, but he would probably be in one of the guards-only rooms. If he remembered correctly, the locker rooms would be right up ahead.

He phased through the next door and found himself in the locker room. One of the lockers was thrown open, netherite gear and miscellaneous items scattered about the floor. It was also conspicuously absent of one prison warden.

*"Huh,"* he muttered, then continued on. He passed into an equipping room, which was also empty of any living beings, then paused, glancing between the two exits.

The one to his left led to a long hallway and a security monitoring room. The one to his right led to the main cell.

Dream hesitated. Sam was probably in the monitoring room, but. . .

He turned right.

Slipping through the door, he entered a short hallway that opened into a large room with lever-lined walls. Straight across from him was a wall of lava, obscuring the entrance to the cell where he had died. He stared into the waves of yellow and orange and wondered if it

would affect him the same way water did. Did it hurt? If he walked into it, would he burn to death, like he had so many times in this very building?

An odd, cold feeling rose in his chest. When Dream looked down, his hands were stained with dark green, fingers bent oddly and fingernails torn off. He flexed them, frowning when the action failed to cause him any pain. It was probably just a matter of appearance, then.

“Dr-Dream?”

“*Sam!*” Dreaxter whirled around, beaming. The green vanished from his uninjured hands. “*There you are! I’ve been looking for you!*”

The warden went pale, staggering back a few steps. The trident dropped from his numb fingers. Dreaxter frowned. “*Are you okay?*”

Sam’s laugh bordered on the edge of hysterical. “Am I-- no, no, Dream, you can’t-- what are you doing here?”

“*My name’s Dreaxter,*” Dreaxter corrected. “*Sapnap wanted to talk to you, but you weren’t answering, so I came up here to tell you. Are you okay? You don’t look okay. Here, have some glitter.*”

Before Sam could react, the ghost had drifted up to him and dropped a handful of glitter over his head. The warden tried to bat him away on instinct, but his hands swished right through Dreaxter’s incorporeal form. The ghost drifted back, frowning.

“*Do you feel better now?*” he asked.

Sam looked down at himself. His head and shoulders were now dusted with glitter. “You just threw glitter at me,” he said, sounding bewildered.

Dreaxter nodded. “*I did.*”

“... Why?”

“*Because glitter makes people happy!*” Dreaxter beamed, doing a twirl to showcase his glitter-covered hoodie. “*See? I’ve got lots, so I’m really happy!*”

“It’s like Ghostbur’s Blue,” Sam realized. He sounded. . . off, shaky, his words a bit too breathy. Dreaxter tilted his head, taking a moment to really *look* at him.

Sam looked - for lack of a better term - like a mess. His hair was a rat’s nest, his eyebags had eyebags, and he was almost as pale as Dreaxter.

“*When was the last time you saw the sun?*”

Sam startled. “What?”

“*When was the last time you saw the sun?*” the ghost repeated. “*You look terrible.*”

Sam laughed. The sound was edged with hysteria. "It's-- been a while," he choked out, pressing a hand to his face. "Prime. *Prime*, Dream. How much do you remember?"

"*Dreaxter*," the ghost corrected automatically. "*Not a lot. I remember making the server, I think. You were there, with Sapnap and George, and Bad, and. . . and. . .*" his brow furrowed. "*I can't remember. Tommy says I've forgotten a lot.*"

Sam jerked. "Tommy? You're-- you know Tommy?"

"*He's my friend*," Dream said. Sam shuddered, looking slightly sick. "*But anyway, I came here because. . . because Sapnap wanted to talk to you! I remember that. He's been trying to call you for a while. And, and I came up here to tell you.*"

"I know," Sam said shortly.

Dreaxter blinked. "*You. . . know?*"

Sam turned away and began heading back down the hall. "Yes."

"*Wait, wait, what?*" The ghost hurried after him. "*Then why didn't you answer him?*"

"Because I don't want to talk to him."

Dreaxter frowned. ". . . *Why?*"

Sam slowed as they entered another room, weighing his answer. "It's a long story," he said at last.

"*I have time.*"

Sam exhaled sharply. "It's. . . you don't want to know, Dream. Sorry. Dreaxter."

Dreaxter worried his bottom lip, looking contemplative. "*Then. . . will you tell me, at least?*"

Sam stopped in his tracks. "Tell you what?"

"*You know. How, um, how I died.*"

Several long seconds ticked by. ". . . You don't remember," Sam said softly.

"*Not a lot*," Dreaxter admitted. "*I know I was cold, but. . .*"

Sam abruptly started moving again, swifter this time. Dreaxter yelped. "*Wait, Sam! Where are you going?!*"

"You don't want to know how you died," Sam answered, his eyes fixed on the door at the end of the hall.

"*I think I do, actually*," the ghost protested.

“No,” The warden gritted out, pressing his keycard against a scanner. The door unlocked with a click and he pushed it open, stepping into the monitoring room. “Just. Don’t ask.”

“Wait, Sam, I just want to know--”

“Goodbye, Dream.”

Sam shut the door. Dreaxter stared at it for a long moment, the glitter dusting his hands and hair fading away. His form began to flicker, fading between a torn prison jumpsuit and his customary hoodie.

Silently, he turned and floated away.

## 65. *(inspired by Shyguy10)*

“I have a really bad feeling about this.”

Tommy scoffed, swirling the bottle in his hand. “What, scared of some birds?”

“Scared of *Chat*,” Dream corrected. “And for good reason.”

“C’mon, Dream. We spent so much effort getting the feathers from Chat, we can’t just give up now. What’s the worst that could happen?”

“A lot of things,” Dream deadpanned, but he uncorked his bottle and raised it towards Tommy. “Well, here goes. Cheers.”

Tommy watched as he downed the potion. For a moment, nothing happened. Dream frowned, looking up at Tommy, only to yelp when he began to shrink. Soon, he had disappeared under a mountain of clothes.

Tommy crouched down. “Hey, Big D? You alive?”

A disgruntled-looking crow wiggled out from under the hoodie, its feathers in disarray. It gave itself a good shake, then proceeded to go still and stare blankly into the distance.

“Uh, Dream?” Tommy waved a hand in front of the crow’s face. “You good?”

The crow jumped, letting out a startled squawk. It waddled over to Tommy and pecked at the potion bottle in his hands.

“Okay, okay,” Tommy muttered, uncorking the bottle and downing it. “Happy?”

Dream watched him, head tilted to the side. Tommy grimaced as the familiar, borderline-uncomfortable tingling that accompanied animal transformations washed over him. Soon he was shrinking, the trees around them appearing to grow larger and larger.

Fighting his way out of the pile of discarded clothing, he stomped over to Dream. “Okay,” he squawked. Prime, he hated trying to talk as a bird. Even though it was possible, it put a ridiculous amount of strain on his vocal cords and also sounded terrible. “What’s the big--”

*NEW CROWS? NEW CHAT MEMBERS? WELCOME!! HELLO HELLO HELLO!*

“--holy fucking *shit*,” he breathed, staggering sideways as a cacophony of overlapping voices exploded in his brain. “What the fuck. *What the fuck.*”

*Woahh we haven’t had new members in so long. SO LONG. Who? Who? Who? I’m Dream. That’s Tommy.*

Tommy startled, whipping around to look at Dream. He recognized that last voice.

Dream? He asked. Wait, we have telepathic brain shit now?

Dream cocked his head. *Seems like it.*

*Dream and Tommy? Tommy and Dream? Discduo? Discduo pog. Wait how? How did you join us? Philza wouldn’t. But he could. But Dream. All three lives? Impossible.*

Tommy frowned. Or tried to frown. It was difficult with a beak. The hell are you talking about?

A pause. The voices died away, leaving one - the voice of an old man.

*We are the slain, he said, the ones who have chosen to forgive but not forget. Our blood stains his hands.*

Dream straightened. *Philza killed you.*

*He did. We forgave him though! Centuries is a long time to hold a grudge. He didn’t have a choice. I chose to die. He had family, he had to. Speak for yourself, I’m still mad. THAT BETTER BE /J BESTIE. Ofc it’s /j I’m here aren’t I? Those who forget and those who refuse to forgive move on, but we stay with him. But you’re not dead. How did you join us? We would have known if he’d killed Dream. Right? I think? Yeah, definitely.*

Wait, wait, wait, Tommy started. You said-- Philza killed you? You’re, like, the souls of the people he killed?

*Got it in one! Yep. Yeah. Yes. Uh-huh. That’s literally what we just said, idiot.*

What about Wilbur?

*Wilbur had nothing to forgive, but he chose to forget. Big L. He’s a ghostie boy now! An amnesiac ghostie boy! Stop changing the subject and tell us how you became one of us.*

*We drank a potion,* Dream said.



*A potion? Potion? That must have been why they were picking up our feathers. What kind of stupid-ass potion would turn you into one of us? Does that even exist?*

***Tommy invented it.***

*By accident.* Tommy clarified.

*TOMMYINNIT IS A POTION GENIUS??? NOT CLICKBAIT??? You older generations grow more chaotic by the year. WE'VE BEEN AROUND A LONG TIME, YOUNG ONE. WE NEED OUR ENTERTAINMENT. That's hypocritical, calling us chaotic. You younger generations aren't any better. DON'T TEST US. Anyways, why did you join us? Good question. What are your motivations? Sus. Amogus? NO SHUT UP THAT'S DEAD. Yo wait I thought discduo were mortal enemies? But they're friends now? Confusion???*

Dream and Tommy glanced at each other.

***Do we tell them?***

*Can't hurt.*

***Actually--***

*You realize we can still hear you, right? There's no dms in this Chat. Pain. Spain without the s. Piano without the o. That spells 'pian'. Go away grammar palice your not welcome hear. ANYWAYS. Why're you here? We won't tell Phil, promise. Cross our wings and hope to fly. That makes no sense. Shhhhh.*

Tommy huffed. *... we're stuck in a time loop and we want to mess with Phil because we're bored.*

There was a moment of silence.

*Not the weirdest thing we've heard, honestly. Imagine getting stuck in a time loop L. Remember that one time in se--WE DO NOT SPEAK OF THAT. Messing with Phil? That's our specialty. Great idea. All aboard the Messing With Phil train! What're we doing first?*

---

Philza groaned, blearily peeling open his eyes. Given how his room was pitch-dark, it was probably some unholy hour of morning.

So *why the fuck* was someone playing music in his living room?

Grumbling, he dragged himself out of bed, drawing his sword and trudging over to his bedroom door. "Alright you little shits," he declared, slamming it open, only to be blasted in the face with Caramelldansen playing at 95 decibels at two in the morning. The crows

blanketing his living room floor ignored him, continuing to shuffle around in an oddly organized square dance.

Philza stared at them for a long moment, then decided he was too sleep-deprived to question the inner workings of Chat's collective hive mind. Grimacing, he scanned the room, looking for the source of the Primeforsaken music. He eventually located it - a single jukebox, manned by two crows he didn't recognize. He cautiously skirted around the edges of the room, trying to avoid stepping on any crows. When he reached the jukebox, he reached out to pull the disc out-- only to get pecked by one of the crows.

"Shoo," he ordered, batting at it. He received an indignant squawk and another peck for his efforts. Sighing, he picked the crow up and tucked it against his chest, keeping its wings pinned with one arm. The other crow perched on the edge of the device made no move to stop him as he reached out and removed the disc, instead watching him with beady eyes.

The moment the music stopped, the crows froze in place. Even the one Phil pinned down went still. As one, their heads swiveled around to stare at the jukebox. Kinda unnerving, but Philza wasn't going to ask any questions. He just wanted to sleep, damnit.

The crow perched on the edge of the jukebox tilted its head, then snapped its beak. Philza's brain short-circuited as another disk appeared in a flash of light. The crow leaned forward and carefully placed the disc into the jukebox. The music resumed.

Philza stared at the crow as it sat back. Somehow, this crow had an inventory. Had Chat always had an inventory? Is that why all his shiny things kept disappearing?

Slowly, he reached out and stole the second disc. The crow just pulled out another copy of the disc and placed it in the jukebox, maintaining eye contact the entire time.

Philza sighed and resigned himself to a long, sleepless night.

## Chapter End Notes

HI HELLO [SLIME BLOCK LOOP FANART](#) by Gusiluz2792 which I adore

Also new inspired fic! It's rlly well-written, go give it a look :D

Also serious question: what is discduo + tubbo called? like the three of them? is there a name for that trio or--

### **Loop Notes:**

**61.** Getting the ender dragon scales for the animal transformation potion took a lot of time, crime, and bargaining with god, but the end result was definitely worth it.

**65.** Eventually, Philza realized he could break the jukebox. So he did. Unfortunately, Dream had five more.

# Chapter 14

## Chapter Notes

### Spotlighted Comments

**insomniousscat:**

phil, breaking the jukebox: aha! i have thwarted your plans

dream, another jukebox ready: and i have thwarted your thwarting of my plans

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

66. remix, pt. 2 ([see previous parts of this loop here](#))

“You look like shit.”

“I didn’t notice,” Dream replied dryly. Tommy scowled.

“No, seriously. Why the hell are you so thin?”

“I’ve been skipping meals.”

“*Why?*”

Dream shrugged. “Might as well get the full experience.”

“I-- Dream, what the fuck.” Tommy shook his head. “No. No, no, fuck that. There are *mobs* out here, Dream, and if you’re not eating enough then you’re gonna get hurt.”

“So? I have three lives left.” Dream didn’t meet Tommy’s gaze. “It’s not quite what happened to you, but--”

“No, stop,” Tommy snapped. “This isn’t-- this isn’t fucking *right*--”

“This has to look realistic, Tommy.” Dream glanced up at the gathering clouds. “Sides, it’s not so bad. At least I can see the sky here.”

Tommy’s next protest died on his lips. “. . . Fine,” he bit out after a long moment of silence. “But you better not die on me, okay? I don’t care if you have three-- three canon lives, just-- fucking *don’t*.”

Dream’s lips quirked into a small smile. “I’ll try not to. Now c’mon, let’s get inside before it starts raining.”

---

Tubbo was worried.

Ever since Dream had been exiled, Tommy had been growing steadily more distant. He rarely showed up to cabinet meetings, instead disappearing for days at a time. When questioned as to his whereabouts, he'd claim that he was 'making sure the green bastard doesn't try anything'. He was adamant that nobody visited Dream, insisting that the man was dangerous, that he'd play mind games with anyone who talked to him.

Tubbo had experienced said mind games firsthand, so he was all too happy to stay away. The problem was, he *knew* Tommy wasn't immune to Dream's manipulation. Tommy spent so much time with Dream nowadays. Who knew what the man was doing to him?

These thoughts were what led to Tubbo standing in front of the nether portal, fidgeting nervously with his tie. He'd been here several times already, having followed Tommy on his third trip to visit Dream. Each time, he'd chickened out and gone back without entering the portal.

But Tommy hadn't been back in L'Manberg for two weeks now, the longest he'd ever been away since they retook it from Schlatt. That was. . . concerning.

Taking a deep breath, Tubbo squared his shoulders and stepped into the portal.

The first thing he noticed was the smell, the scent of rain and burnt wood choking the air. The next thing he noticed were the ruins.

The area he was standing in had once been a forest, if the charred tree stumps were any indication. The ground was carpeted with a thick mat of soggy ash, the occasional ember flickering in the soot like a dying star. Ten feet away, the burnt plants gave way to a mix of charred dirt and melted sand, which ended abruptly where the ocean began. An eerie silence hung heavy over the beach, not dissimilar to that of a graveyard.

Tubbo stepped out into the open. Through the hazy air, he could see the charred skeleton of a house. Its stone foundations were blackened and streaked with pale ash, scaffolding burnt nearly completely away.

A single, familiar figure stood in front of it. He was facing away from Tubbo, head upturned towards the remains of the house.

"Tommy?"

"Tubbo," Tommy said. His voice was cold. Tubbo hesitated, a chill passing down his spine. "You shouldn't be here."

"I haven't seen you in two weeks," Tubbo replied as he came to a stop five feet away. "I was worried."

"You shouldn't be here," Tommy repeated. He turned around. Tubbo stiffened, horror sinking into his bones.

A familiar mask was strapped over Tommy's face, an onyx smile etched into its surface. One edge of it was chipped and slightly singed, but the rest of it was pristine as ever, an eerie bone-white that glinted under the dying sunlight.

"T-Tommy?" Tubbo breathed. "Why. . . why are you wearing that?"

Tommy tilted his head, fingers coming up to brush the mask. "Oh, this? I took it from Dream."

Tubbo swallowed. "And. . . and where is Dream?"

Tommy hummed. "He ran away."

Tubbo blinked. "Ran. . . away? From exile? Does-- does that mean he's in the SMP? In L'Manberg?"

"No." Tommy turned back to the house. "He left the beach. He's not supposed to leave the beach."

Tubbo frowned. "It's fine as long as he stays out of the mainland, Tommy."

"But if he's not here, I can't keep an eye on him," Tommy snapped. He kicked a piece of rubble with his foot. "And if I don't keep an eye on him, who knows what the fuck he'll get up to. I'm gonna go hunt him down."

Tubbo frowned. "I-- wouldn't it make more sense to stay back in L'Manberg and defend it? Tommy, you're the vice, we need you back here. We can-- we can send a search party after Dream--"

"No, Tubbo." Tubbo took a step back as Tommy stepped forward, his fingers curling into fists. "You don't understand-- the shit he says. I know his tricks-- if you send a search party out there, he'll turn them to his side with some fucking pity story."

"We need you back in L'Manberg!" Tubbo protested. "I know you're worried about Dream, but--"

"I'm going after him." It wasn't a request, it was a statement. "Just fuckin' *try* to stop me, Tubbo. I dare you."

Tubbo felt his heart sink into his stomach. "Tommy, please," he started. Tommy snorted.

"*Tommy, please,*" he parroted, and Tubbo got the distinct impression that he was rolling his eyes behind his mask. "Prime, you've grown soft. Either get a backbone and stop me yourself or go back to L'Manberg. Don't just stand there looking pathetic."

Tubbo said nothing.

"Don't know what I expected you to do," Tommy muttered. He turned away. "Well, *Mister President*, I'll be back as soon as I track Dream down. Don't come after me."

He disappeared into the fog, leaving Tubbo alone in the smoking ruins.

---

Technoblade held his sword up to the firelight, squinting, before lowering it and running the whetstone over it again. The *shhk* of metal against stone and the crackling of the fire washed over him, mixing with the low murmur of voices in his head. For the first time in a while, he felt calm. Content.

A knock shattered his momentary peace.

Technoblade narrowed his eyes at the door. It was snowing something fierce at the moment, the wind battering the windows and whisking freshly fallen flakes off the ground. Nobody should have been out in weather like this.

He calmly rose to his feet, newly-sharpened sword in hand, and stalked to the door. “Who's there?” he called. There might have been an answer, but the voice was so faint the words were lost in the wind. Technoblade let out a huff and opened the door.

A man was standing at his doorstep, clothes and hair laced with ice. The tips of his fingers were nearly white - a sign of skin-deep frostbite. His face was unfamiliar-- gaunt and pale, with a dusting of freckles and a small scar across the bridge of his nose. His tattered hoodie, however, was *very* recognizable. Technoblade would know that shade of green anywhere.

“... Dream?”

“Hi,” Dream croaked, right before he toppled over and passed out at Technoblade’s feet.

## 67. (*inspired by Chip\_Seasoning*)

“Oh, him too?” was Sapnap’s exasperated question when he saw Tommy.

“*Too?*” Wilbur demanded, “What do you mean, t-- oh.”

“Hi *fur*-ends,” Dream called, the whiskers painted on his cheeks crinkling with the force of his grin. “How we *feline* today?”

“Oh Prime,” Fundy whimpered, eyes fixed on the cat-eared headband on Dream’s head. “It’s another one.”

“Dream!” Tommy shrieked, marching up to him. He jabbed a finger in the other man’s face, the cloth dog ears on his own headband flopping back and forth with every movement. “I challenge you to a sword duel *fur* L’Manberg’s independence!”

George let out a slow, long, breath, then looked up at the revolutionaries. “Has he been like this all day?”

“Yup,” Tubbo confirmed gleefully. “It’s been driving Wilbur mad. Dream too?”

“Yeah,” Sapnap muttered. “He’s been making fucking *cat puns* all day. It’s terrible.”

“Not as terrible as Tommy’s dog puns,” Wilbur deadpanned. “Nothing is as terrible as Tommy’s dog puns.”

“Excuse you?!” Tommy shrieked. “My dog puns are *pug*! Your tiny brain cannot comprehend their sheer *pawesomeness*--”

“*Purr*haps I should say yes to the duel,” Dream interrupted loudly. “But if I recall, you’ve *nefur* managed to take *meowt* in a fight. Betting L’Man*purr*’s independence on this seems like a risky decision.”

“You’re a *fur*midable fighter,” Tommy admitted, “but I’m *pawsitive* about my chances.”

“Okay, pause for a second,” Punz cut in. “Look, I’m sorry, but can you *please* for the love of Prime stop with the puns. I can’t take anything seriously.”

“No,” Dream and Tommy said in unison, then turned back to each other.

“You’re serious about this?” Dream asked.

“*Fur* sure,” Tommy confirmed. “Don’t you dare underestimate me, you bastard. I’ve gotten a lot better since the last time we fought.”

Dream shrugged. “Alright then. Sword duel until first blood. If I win, L’Manberg gets dissolved. *Purr*manently. If you win, L’Manberg gets independence.”

“Deal.” Tommy smirked. “. . . Don’t *terrier*-self up about it when you lose.”

“As if,” Dream scoffed. “But don’t worry-- when you lose, you’ll still go down in *hiss*-tory.”

“Okay, that’s it, I’m done,” Fundy declared, turning on his heel and marching away. “Fuck this. No. Bye.”

“Oh c’mon, Fundy!” Dream called after him. “We’re just *kitten* around!”

“Don’t be such a *pawty pupper*,” Tommy added.

Fundy’s scream of rage could be heard from miles away.

**68.** (*inspired by InsomniacCoffeeAllTheWay*)

“RANBOO!” All four syndicate members jumped as Tommy burst through the door of the supposedly top-secret Syndicate meeting room, wild-eyed and covered in dirt. “RANBOO,

HE KNOWS-- HE FOUND OUT ABOUT THE PLAN--”

Ranboo paled. “Oh. Oh no.”

“Yes, *oh no*,” Tommy snapped, hurrying up to him. “We gotta do it now, otherwise--”

“Wait wait *wait*,” Philza started, rising to his feet. “What the fuck is happening? What plan? Who--”

“Shut up, oldza,” Tommy snapped. He pulled an armful of Eyes of Ender from his inventory and shoved them into Ranboo’s hands. “He’s gonna be here any second now, hurry hurry hurry--”

Ranboo vaulted over the Syndicate table, ignoring the startled shouts, and promptly began shoving the Eyes into the slots on the table as quickly as he could. Tommy clambered onto the frame, stripping away the surface of the table with his pickaxe.

“What--” Technoblade spluttered, watching as his beloved table was destroyed. “How did you even find this place?!”

“None of-- your-- fucking business,” Tommy grunted as he pulled blocks up. “Ranboo, how many--”

“Three more,” Ranboo gasped, once again vaulting over the table (nearly kicking Tommy in the face) and slamming down another Eye of Ender. “Two-- one--”

**“STOP.”**

Both teens screamed in surprise. The last Eye of Ender disappeared into Ranboo’s inventory with a flash of light as XD stormed into the Syndicate room, looking every bit like a vengeful deity. He had foregone his human form, instead dressed in a verdant cloak and floating nearly a foot off the floor. Two halos encircled his head, spinning in dizzying circles, and the painted lines of his mask glowed a venomous green.

His intimidating appearance, however, was slightly offset by the fact that he was covered in glitter.

**“STOP,”** the god boomed again. **“YOU DARE ATTEMPT TO ACCESS THE END?”**

“The End?” Tommy laughed nervously. “What’s that?”

Ranboo nodded vigorously. “Uh-huh. No idea what that is. Sorry.”

**“DO NOT LIE TO ME. I SAW YOUR PLANS, WRITTEN IN THAT JOURNAL.”**

“Wait, *that’s* where my memory book went?”

“You wrote down the fucking *top-secret plan*?!”

“You know what my memory’s like!”



“You are an absolute fucking *idiot*, a moron of *the highest caliber*--”

“I *know*--”

“**SILENCE.**”

Ranboo let out an undignified ‘eep’ and shut his mouth. XD floated closer, his shadow writhing and stretching into a monstrous shape.

**“I DO NOT KNOW HOW YOU DISCOVERED THE END, BUT YOU WILL PAY DEARLY FOR ATTEMPTING TO BREAK MY RULES. NOW TELL ME HOW YOU LEARNED OF THE END’S EXISTENCE, AND I WILL LET YOU LIVE.”**

“Uh. . . uh. . .” Tommy’s eyes darted from side to side. “. . . books?”

The mask covering XD’s face hid his expression, but every mortal in the room got the distinct impression that he was glowering. **“WHAT BOOKS?”**

“Those books!” Tommy blurted, flinging a finger in the direction of the doors. XD turned to look, and in that moment, Ranboo shoved the last Eye of Ender into place. The portal flared to life with an ominous hiss.

XD whipped around with a snarl. “*GO GO GO GO GO!*” Tommy screamed, kicking Ranboo into the portal before throwing himself into it. The deity roared and dove after them, viridian flames flaring around his cloak. The moment they were through, the portal fizzled, Eyes of Ender shattering one by one before the entire frame collapsed in on itself and crumbled into a pile of yellow dust.

“What,” Niki said into the ensuing silence.

“What,” Philza echoed, then added, “the everloving *fuck*?”

Technoblade stared mournfully at the pile of dust. “My table. . .”

## 69.

The bell above the door rang as someone stepped into the diner. “Just a second!” Dream called. Moments later, he hurried out of the kitchen. “Oh, hey Connor.”

“Hey,” Connor greeted. He scanned the restaurant, taking in the shining tables, the plush chairs, and the sparkling black countertop. “Nice place you got here.”

“Thanks.” Dream tapped the cash register sitting on the counter. “So what can I get you?”

Connor squinted up at the menu hanging above the counter. “I’m broke. Seriously. The only thing I can afford is a cup of water.”

Dream shrugged. "On the house, then. We've had a slow day, I could use some good company."

"I EXIST!" Tommy hollered from the kitchens.

"You don't count as good company," Dream called back. "Too annoying."

"FUCK YOU!" Tommy shoved his way through the swinging kitchen doors. "I'LL SHOW YOU ANNOYING, YOU-- oh. Heyyy, Connor! Big man! Didn't recognize your voice. How you doin'?"

Connor blinked. "Uh. . . hungry?"

"You've come to the right place," Tommy declared, sweeping his arm in a grand arc and nearly hitting Dream in the throat. "Big T's Burger Tower! So what can I get you?"

"It's on the house," Dream added. Tommy shot him a look, but Dream just shrugged. Tommy rolled his eyes.

"Okay, fine, yeah, it's on the house."

"Uh. Okay then. Could I have a . . . sparkling burger and fries?" Connor paused. "Why is everything on the menu labeled 'sparkling'?"

"Sparkling burger and fries, coming right up! Dream, I have been chopping the potatoes for an hour straight. You do the fucking cooking."

"Yeah, yeah," Dream muttered, pulling an apron out from under the counter and trudging into the kitchen.

"No, seriously, why is everything labeled 'sparkling'?" Connor looked worried. "Is it. . . is it like sparkling water? Are you guys pumping air into your burgers?"

Tommy wrinkled his nose. "Fuck no. You'll see when you get your food. Go find a place to sit, I'll join you after I get a soda."

---

"Food's done," Dream declared, kicking the kitchen door open and slipping away from it before it could slam into him or the tray of food he was carrying. He strode up to the table and set the tray down in front of Connor, who stared at it. "Here you go. Enjoy."

"Uh," said Connor, poking his burger. There was glitter scattered through the bread and the meat. "Are you sure this is. . . edible?"

"It's all edible glitter," Dream assured, sliding into the seat next to Tommy. "It won't kill you."

“Uh-huh.” Connor eyed the burger dubiously, then picked up a fry. “And I’m. . . supposed to dip this in this cup.”

“Yep.”

“Which is full of edible glitter.”

“Yep.”

“What do you have against ketchup?”

Tommy shrugged. “Nothing, glitter’s just better.”

“If you say so,” Connor muttered, then stuck the fry in the red glitter and shoved it in his mouth. He chewed for a long, contemplative moment, swallowed, then looked up at the two restaurant owners. “This is disgusting.”

“It really is,” Dream agreed. “But at least we’re unique.”

“True.” Connor ate the next fry without bothering to dip it in the glitter. “So you put edible glitter in all your food?”

“Pretty much, yeah. That’s why all the stuff is called ‘sparkling’.” Dream leaned back into the chair. “As a sales pitch, it’s been pretty successful, but we’ve gotten some mixed results when it comes to actually eating the food.”

“Can’t imagine why,” Connor muttered.

Dream cleared his throat. “SO. What have you been up to? I haven’t seen you around the server lately.”

Connor picked up his burger and avoided eye contact. “I’ve been around. Doing stuff. Hanging out with some new friends, things like that.” He took a bite of the burger and promptly grimaced.

“You don’t have to keep eating it if you don’t want to,” Tommy said. Connor shook his head.

“Free food, can’t waste it,” he choked out. He took another brave bite of his burger, gagged, and promptly set his burger down. “Do you. . . have water?”

Tommy snorted and rose to his feet, disappearing back into the kitchens. He came back with a glass filled with ice water. “Here you go, big man.”

“Thanks,” Connor managed. He promptly began downing water as if his life depended on it.

“It can’t be that bad,” Dream muttered, narrowing his eyes at the culinary atrocity. Tommy snickered.

At last, Connor set his cup down. He wiped his mouth with the napkin, then leaned back into his seat and sighed. “Okay, yeah, I think I can afford to waste a bit. Thanks for the food, but I

actually came here 'cause I wanted to ask you about something.”

“Yeah?” Dream asked distractedly. He was still staring at the burger as if it had personally offended him.

“You’re in a time loop, aren’t you?”

Dream’s head snapped up at the same time that Tommy choked on his soda. Connor watched them, amused, as the teenager sputtered, beating his fist against his chest.

“What-- the *fuck*,” he wheezed between coughing fits. “I-- *how*.”

Connor grinned. “You’re not the first time traveller I’ve met. You guys give off the same. . . aura, vibe, I don’t know what to call it.” He paused and glanced around the restaurant.

“Though, uh, there’s also your sudden change in behavior.”

Tommy stiffened. “Wait, wait, back up for a second-- you’ve met another time traveller?”

“Yep. He’s not in a loop like you, though. He just moves back and forth.”

“Who?” Dream demanded. “Do we know him?”

Connor shrugged. “Maybe. He doesn’t know I know-- or maybe he does, I have no idea-- but I promised I wouldn’t tell. You guys gotta figure it out yourselves. Sorry.”

Tommy scowled. “What the fuck, man-- you can’t just-- tell us that and then brush it off!”

Connor shook his head. “Figure it out yourselves,” he repeated.

“Connor,” Dream said. “We’re in a time loop, yeah, but we don’t want to be here forever. This-- other time traveler you talked about-- if he could help us--”

“I can’t tell you,” Connor insisted. “I’m sorry, but I *can’t*. I know you guys’ll find him eventually--”

“We’re over a thousand loops in and we didn’t even *know* someone else was time travelling,” Tommy snarled. “Dammit, Connor, just fucking *tell* us. I’m not above trapping you in this shitty restaurant until we get an answer.”

Dream shot Tommy an alarmed look. “Tommy--”

“*No*. I’m not gonna waste five years looking for the dude when Connor *literally* has the answer. It’s not like he’ll remember anything we do this loop!”

There was a moment of tense silence. Connor shrank into his seat, suddenly appearing to realize exactly how much of a predicament he’d gotten himself into. Dream was watching Tommy warily, his hands half-raised as though he was ready to grab him.

“Too far?” Tommy asked quietly.

“Too far,” Dream confirmed. Tommy let out an explosive sigh and fell back into his chair, grimacing. He ran a hand through his hair, then looked up at Connor.

“Sorry, big C,” he muttered. “I didn’t mean that.”

Connor managed a nervous smile. “Yeah, uh. Okay. That’s okay. Um. I. . . I think-- I think I should probably go.”

“Alright,” Dream said. “Thanks for telling us about the other guy.”

Connor shrugged uncomfortably and stood. “No problem. Good luck figuring it out.” He glanced towards the door, then back at the two loopers. “And good luck with your restaurant.”

He hurried out of the diner, the bell over the door chiming cheerily as the door clicked shut behind him. Tommy and Dream sat in silence, the abandoned fries cooling on the table between them.

At last Tommy sighed, slumping forward and pressing his forehead against the table. “Fuck.”

Dream let out a humorless chuckle. “You can say that again.”

“*Fuck*,” Tommy repeated. He lifted his head and pressed the heels of his palms into his eyes. “Fuuuuuuuck. I did it again.”

“You caught yourself this time.” Dream folded his arms across his chest, turning his gaze to the window. “That’s better than me.”

“I’m not comparing myself to you, you bastard,” Tommy muttered. “I know this looping shit is messing with our morals, but *fuck*. I seriously considered *making* him tell us and-- Prime, this is so messed up.”

“I did too,” Dream confessed quietly. “But we didn’t, and we let him go. That. . . that counts for something.”

Tommy peered at him. “You don’t sound too sure about that, big man.”

“I’m not.”

“Encouraging.”

“Thanks, I try to be.”

They sat in companionable silence for a while, watching the sun set through the window. At last, Dream shifted. “. . . so who do you think the time traveller is?”

“Probably Ranboob,” Tommy grunted. “He’s such a main character, of fucking *course* he’d be time travelling.”

“We’ll go talk to him tomorrow morning, then,” Dream decided, rising to his feet. “I don’t think either of us feel. . . calm enough to hold a conversation with someone else tonight.”

Tommy, tellingly, didn't protest.

**70.** *(credit to curry\_powder)*

Niki started as the bakery door swung open, pasting on her customer service smile as she looked up. The smile promptly slid off her face when Schlatt strolled in, followed by a nervous-looking Fundy.

“Mister President,” she greeted coldly.

“Niki Nihachu,” Schlatt returned. “I’m here for my money.”

Niki blinked, caught off guard. “. . . Your money?”

Schlatt shrugged. “If you want to keep a business in Manberg, you have to pay the taxes.” He reached into his inventory and produced an envelope, tossing it onto the counter in front of the baker. TAX NOTICE was stamped across it in blaring red.

Slowly, Niki reached forward and unfolded it. She stared down at it for a long moment, then looked up at Schlatt. “A. . . a stack of diamonds? Are you serious?!”

“Government sets the rules. Pay the taxes, or your business gets demolished.”

Niki looked back down at the paper,

Schlatt hummed, an oily grin spreading across his face. “Well? You got the money?” At Niki’s silence, the grin widened. “No?”

“Schlatt,” Fundy pleaded, his ears pressing back against his head. Schlatt held up a hand, eyes fixed on Niki.

“Guess we’ll have to demolish your bakery.”

“You can’t do this,” she said quietly. “I won’t let you.”

Schlatt laughed. “What’re you gonna do, stab me with that butter knife?”

Niki paused, looking down at the butter knife laying by the cash register. She picked it up and turned it over, running her fingers over the symbols engraved in the handle. The serrated edge gleamed with a sheen of faint purple.

*(“Happy birthday,” Dream said, shoving a thin black box into her hand. “I got you a piece of metal.”*

*Niki glanced down at the box. “Dream, my birthday’s in November.”*

*“Happy early birthday,” Dream amended. “I definitely didn’t forget what day your birthday was.”*

*“Definitely,” Niki echoed, a smile tugging on the edges of her lips. She undid the royal blue ribbon tied around the box and lifted the lid, feeling her eyebrows raise. “. . . a butter knife?”*

*“A butter knife,” Dream confirmed gravely. “The greatest weapon known to mankind.”*

*Niki laughed and replaced the lid. “Thank you, Dream.”*

*“No problem.” Dream’s serious facade cracked into a grin. “Thank Tommy, actually. He’s the one that made the knife, I just added some enchantments.”*

*A pause. “. . . Enchantments?”*

*“Sharpness V, Power IV, Looting II, Unbreaking III,” Dream’s grin widened into something predatory, “and of course, Sweeping Edge I. I would have added Fire Aspect, but I thought that would be a bit overboard.”*

*Niki looked back down at the little black box, suddenly much more aware of exactly what it held inside. “I . . . how did you enchant this with Power? And why a butter knife?”*

*Dream’s smile abruptly disappeared. “Schlatt’s not. . . I know he doesn’t like you, Niki. I thought it’d be better if you had something you could easily conceal.” He paused. “As for the Power enchantment. . . don’t question it, Niki. Just don’t question it.”*

*Niki stared at him for a long moment, then sighed. “. . . Thank you, Dream. Really. And thank Tommy for me too.”*

*“Will do.” Dream pulled his mask back over his face, glancing over his shoulder. “Well, I better go before someone sees me. Stay safe, Niki.”*

*“You too.”*

*Dream sent her one last grin, then dashed away.)*

Niki let out a slow exhale, turned the butter knife between her fingers, then casually tapped it on the counter. The marble promptly cracked, sliced cleanly in a diagonal. A triangular portion that made up about a quarter of the counter slid off with a grinding noise and crashed to the floor.

Well. That was a lot more effective than she was expecting.

“Enchantments,” she said by way of explanation. Her smile grew slightly vicious as Schlatt paled and took a step back. “A friend of mine is very good with them. He’s the one who gave me this, and I do believe he hates you. So yes, I would stab you with this butter knife.”

“Wait, Nihachu,” Schlatt blurted as the baker stepped around the ruined counter. “Niha-- Niki, we can talk about this--”

“Never speak of taxes in my presence again,” Niki ordered, “and *maybe* I’ll let you leave with your limbs intact.”

“Of course,” Schlatt agreed quickly. “Yeah. Deal. Do whatever the fuck you want.”

“Glad we could reach an agreement, Mister President.” Niki raised the butter knife. “Now get out of my bakery.”

Schlatt had never run faster in his life.

## Chapter End Notes

Note: this fic probably isn’t gonna be updated until the middle of november because I’m entering a very stressful period of my life rn and I won’t have a lot of writing time.

Sorry. :(

Question: in the encyclopedia of loops, do y’all want a compilation of plot-relevant loops too?

### **Loop Notes**

**67.** The author lost a bit of her soul writing this one.

**68.** Dream had to do a bit of fiddling to make sure the end portal would activate after XD’s tampering, but at least Ranboo and Tommy got to see the End. Of course, they only managed to stay there for about five seconds before XD yeeted them back into the Overworld.

**70.** Fortunately for Schlatt, Niki left Manberg a few days later to join Pogtopia.

Unfortunately for Schlatt, Pogtopia easily retook Manberg with the help of Niki and her OP butter knife.



# Chapter 15

## Chapter Notes

guess who was wrong about needing a hiatus because she ended up stresswriting almost 5k words? Totally not me ahaha  
But thank you all so much for your kind words and encouragement (^^) They mean a lot.

### Spotlighted Comments

**JustASmolLoser:** An enchanted butter knife whats next a potato with knockback ll!??

. . . Wait a damn minute 😭

**Mixy\_ttwara:** I practice extreme sports: I read this fic while in the train and I try not to laugh at the idea of XD yeeting children from the End

**Xylakyo952:** Time for a revolution boys down with pog and make way for the rise of pug.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

*71. (credit to Smallest, tigergrace and insomniousscat)*

“I’ll give you independence on one condition.”

“Name it.”

Dream bared his teeth in a smile. “Get every question correct in my Trivia game.”

There was a moment of confused silence. Wilbur blinked, clearly at a loss for words. “And. . . and if I say no?”

“Then we go to war.” Dream spread his hands. “Your choice.”

“We’ll play the trivia game,” Wilbur decided. Dream grinned.

“Excellent choice. Follow me.”

---

“The fuck is this?”

“Good question!” Dream swept his arm out towards the five buttons, aligned in a row on two-block pillars in front of them. “Press the button if you think you have the answer. First

person who presses the button answers for the whole group. Does that make sense?”

The L’Manbergians exchanged uneasy glances. “You had this set up,” Eret said.

“Yeah, because I assumed you’d rather do a trivia game than go to war.” Dream tilted his head. “Unless. . .?”

“No, no, we’re doing the trivia game,” Wilbur broke in.

“Excellent. Choose your buttons, then we’ll get started.”

Tommy moved forward, only to be stopped by Wilbur. “Wait,” he ordered, picking up a rock. He tossed it, watching as it landed on the button. When nothing happened, he picked up another rock and made as if to throw it at another button.

“It’s not a trap,” Dream called.

“Why should we believe you?” Wilbur demanded. Dream let out a put-upon sigh, strolled over to the buttons, and proceeded to press every single one.

“Happy?” he demanded.

Tommy snorted and marched over to the buttons, ignoring the noise of protest Wilbur made. “C’m on,” he called to the other revolutionaries. “Let’s just get this shit over with. The sooner we finish, the sooner we get independence.”

The other four exchanged glances before reluctantly moving to join him. Dream grinned under his mask, producing a book from his inventory.

“Ready?” A round of nods. “First question. What block is unbreakable?”

Fundy quickly slapped his button. “Bedrock.”

“Correct.” Dream shifted. “Who is the current unofficial ruler of the Dream SMP?”

*Current?* Tubbo mouthed. Tommy shrugged. Wilbur pressed his button. “You.”

“Correct. What is the ground of the Nether made up of?”

“Netherrack,” Eret answered.

“Correct. Name one hostile mob.”

“Skeleton!”

“Correct.”

“This feels too easy,” Wilbur muttered.

“Don’t jinx it,” Fundy hissed.

Dream cleared his throat. “Who was the first person to say the quote, ‘It was never meant to be’?”

The revolutionaries paused, exchanging glances. “Uh,” Tubbo said. “I don’t know this one.”

“You jinxed it,” Fundy informed Wilbur. Wilbur opened his mouth to reply, only to be interrupted when Tommy slammed his hand down on the button.

“Eret,” he declared.

“Correct.”

“What?” Eret asked. “I-- I did?”

Dream ignored his question. “What is TommyInnit’s favorite block?”

“Cobblestone,” all five L’Manbergians answered in unison.

“For some reason,” Wilbur added.

Tommy rounded on him. “Fuck you, cobblestone is an amazing block.”

Dream grinned. “Correct. How many iron ingots does it take to create one block of iron?”

“Nine!” Tubbo chirped.

“Correct. Name one faction that sprang up after the disc confrontation.”

Another pause as the revolutionaries glanced at each other, only for Tommy to chime in once more. “Las Nevadas!”

Tubbo squinted at Tommy. “What’s las nebadas?”

“Disc confrontation?” Fundy asked at the same time.

“Correct.” Dream flipped a page in his book. “Name one hybrid currently on this server, and the hybrid type.”

Wilbur grinned. “Fundy, fox.”

“*Furry*,” Tommy coughed into his fist. Fundy’s head whipped towards him, but Tommy just shot him an innocent look.

“Correct. What event did BadBoyHalo host as a ploy for human sacrifice?”

All lightheartedness promptly disappeared from the air. The other members of the Dream SMP, who had previously been watching with amusement, straightened. George blinked. “I-- he did what?”

“Red Banquet,” Tommy said.

“Wait, wait, back up, Bad did *what?*”

“Correct. Name two things that ultimately contributed to Schlatt’s death.”

“Dream, don’t just ignore me--”

“Alcohol and stress.”

“Correct.” Dream raised his voice so he could be heard over the confused spluttering coming from the others. “Who did Philza Minecraft kill the day he joined the server?”

“Wilbur!”

“Philza isn’t even on the fucking server-- what do you mean he killed me?!”

“Correct. How many people, counting those who were pretending, have betrayed the original L’Manberg and Pogtopia?”

Tommy paused. “Uh. . . six. I think. Does Tubbo count?”

“Wha-- I’ve never betrayed L’Manberg before!”

Eret’s eyes widened. “But there are only five people in L’Manberg right now, does that mean--”

“Correct. What was the purpose of the Butcher Army?”

“To kill Technoblade.”

“Okay, that’s it,” Sapnap declared. He tried to pull the book from Dream’s hands, but Dream casually sidestepped and raised the book above his head, keeping it just out of Sapnap’s reach. Sapnap let out a frustrated growl and tried to knock him over, but Dream ducked away, still talking.

“Correct. Where did I lose two canon lives?”

Sapnap promptly tripped over his feet. “You *what?*”

“Your ugly-ass secret base.”

“. . . Correct. It’s not ugly, but I’ll let that slide. Who remodeled the Community House after it was destroyed for the second time?”

Fundy blinked. “After it was *what?*”

“Captain Puffy!”

“Correct.”

“Who the fuck is--”

“Stop ignoring us, damnit!”

"Can we go back to the part where Dream lost two canon lives?!"

Dream hummed, casually blocked Sapnap's wild grab, and flipped another page in his book. "What did Sam create to help Tommy build his hotel?"

"Hotel?" Tubbo turned to Tommy. "What hotel?"

"Sam Nook!" Tommy cheered. "Man, I love that guy."

"Correct."

"Tommy, what the fuck is a Sam Nook?" Wilbur demanded. "Seriously, what the *hell* is happening?"

Tommy ignored him. "Next question, Big D."

"Give me a moment." Dream had towered up to escape Sapnap, who was now trying to tower up after him. "What was the name of Ghostbur's sheep?"

"Friend!"

"The hell is a *ghostbur*?"

"Who visited the prison every day for a month straight?"

"*Prison*?!"

"Quackity. Easy."

"Correct. What block do piglins love?"

"What the fuck are these questions?" Tommy demanded. When none of the other L'Manbergians moved to press their buttons, he hit his own. "Gold."

"Correct. Whose three canon lives did I take?"

"What the *fuck*?" Sapnap demanded, dropping the block he was holding. He caught himself before he could fall off his tower, then turned so he could glare up at Dream. "You did *what*? When?"

"Mine," Tommy declared. Four heads whipped around to stare at him, faces set in various looks of confusion and concern.

"Tommy, what--" Wilbur started.

"Shh, I'm trying to focus," Tommy snapped.

Dream cleared his throat. "Correct. Name one person that was revived."

“Me. Easy.”

“Tommy, don’t just ignore me--”

“Correct. Who blew up L’Manberg on the Sixteenth?”

“Wilbur!”

--what do you mean ‘revived’, when did Dream take three canon lives-- hold on, I fucking did *what*-- ”

“Correct. Which two members of the Dream SMP are currently in a time loop?”

“Me and you.”

“Correct. Last question: does L’Manberg win independence?”

Tommy grinned. “Hell yes it does.”

“Correct,” Dream declared, shutting the book with a snap. “Good job, you get independence.”

“What the *fuck*? ” Wilbur demanded. “No, seriously. *What the fuck*.”

“Seconded,” George muttered.

Dream shrugged and began towering down. “Tommy and I are stuck in a timeloop.”

“We know the *future*,” Tommy added, grinning widely. The grin fell into a scowl. “Spoiler alert, it’s shit.”

“Ah,” said Eret. “That. . . explains a lot, actually.”

“You’re taking this surprisingly well,” Dream commented.

“I mean. . . it does explain your random decision to play a trivia game,” Punz mused. “We had a war plan laid out already, and then you decided to go completely off the fucking rails for no reason at all.”

Dream winced. “Uh. I had some pretty good reasons, actually. The war usually leads to. . . um.”

“Bad shit,” Tommy supplied.

“What Tommy said.”

Wilbur grimaced. “So. . . so the comment about Philza killing me. . .”

Tommy looked away. “Yeah.”

There was a moment of solemn silence. Then Tubbo stiffened, head whipping towards Dream.

“Wait, you killed Tommy three times?!”

“Maybe,” Dream hedged. “Just a little bit. He got better.”

“He beat me to death with a potato,” Tommy added brightly.

“I said I was sorry!”

“Doesn’t mean I’ll ever let you forget it.”

“You beat Tommy to death,” Tubbo repeated, his hands tightening into fists. His eyes flared. Dream paused and glanced at him, then paled rapidly and took a step back.

Tommy cackled. “You fucked up.”

Tubbo drew a sword from his inventory. Dream promptly ran for his life.

## 72. *(inspired by Perseriph)*

“Hey. Hey Tommy.”

“Dream, it’s fucking three o’five ante meridiem.”

“I know, I know, but this is more important than sleep.”

“Uh-huh,” Tommy muttered drowsily, turning over and pulling his covers over his head. “Tell me ‘bout it in the morning.”

A pause. “But it *is* morning.”

“. . . Tell me ‘bout it when the sun is up.”

Dream unceremoniously ripped Tommy’s blankets away. The teenager yelped, crashing onto the floor. “Dream!”

“Up,” Dream ordered with maniac cheer. Tommy groaned and reluctantly peeled himself off the floor, grumbling the entire time. Dream grabbed him by the wrist and dragged him out of the house, moving with a frantic energy that spoke of several sleepless nights and an abundance of caffeine.

“So last loop, I got into redstone,” he told Tommy. “Just basic stuff, doors, lights, et cetera. But this loop Sam taught me how to make a TNT launcher and I was experimenting with it, and, and, I found something amazing and I need to show you *now--*”

“Dream, when was the last time you slept?”

Dream paused for a moment, genuinely considering the question, then shrugged and continued pulling Tommy down the path. “Doesn’t matter! So as I was saying, I was experimenting with some stuff Sam showed me and then-- and *then--*” they came to a stop in a patch of land, “--look!”

Tommy squinted in the direction where Dream was pointing. The area was peppered with torches, illuminating several dark, bulky shapes. “. . . are those TNT launchers?”

“No. *Watch*,” Dream ordered, dragging him over to one of the devices. He released Tommy so he could reach out and pull the lever.

Fifteen blocks of TNT rocketed through the air and promptly exploded into glitter, showering a huge chunk of ground. The torches crackled as glitter rained down on them, firelight reflecting off the sparkling dust. Tommy stared blankly at the scene, then turned to Dream.

“Dream, why the fuck did you invent this?”

“To bring down nations, what else?”

“You’re going to sleep,” Tommy decided. He hooked an arm around Dream’s shoulders and began hauling him away.

“Wait, but--”

“We can bring down nations tomorrow,” Tommy grumbled, “when it isn’t the witching hour.”

“But *glitter*,” Dream protested.

“*Sleep*,” Tommy countered.

“. . . Fine.”

Dream suffered a caffeine crash halfway back to Tommy’s house and had to be dragged the rest of the way. It was the last time he tried to pull four consecutive all-nighters.

73. *toddler tales, pt. 5* ( [see previous parts of this loop here](#) )

**Private Messaging: awesamdude**

<CaptainPuffy>: *sma*

<CaptainPuffy>: *\*asm*

<CaptainPuffy>: *\*SAM*

<awesamdude>: *what?*

<CaptainPuffy>: *i need help*



*<awesamdude>: Are you in danger?*

*<CaptainPuffy>: no, no nothing like that*

*<CaptainPuffy>: i need help w something else*

*<awesamdude>: with what?*

*<CaptainPuffy>: okay this is going to sound really weird*

*<CaptainPuffy>: but*

*<CaptainPuffy>: i accidentally acquired two children and i have no idea what to do*

*<awesamdude>: what*

*<awesamdude>: how did you*

***awesamdude is typing. . .***

*<awesamdude>: children???*

*<CaptainPuffy>: toddlers, to be exact*

*<awesamdude>: Please tell me you're joking*

*<CaptainPuffy>: sam would I ever joke about there being kids on the server*

*<CaptainPuffy>: especially given how the other kids have been doing*

*<awesamdude>: point*

*<awesamdude>: . . . so there are toddlers on the server.*

*<CaptainPuffy>: not,,, exactly*

*<awesamdude>: ?*

*<CaptainPuffy>: argh how do I put this*

*<CaptainPuffy>: okay so*

***CaptainPuffy is typing. . .***

*<awesamdude>: you've been typing for a minute, you good?*

*<CaptainPuffy>: dream and tommy are the children*

*<CaptainPuffy>: they got turned into kids*

*<CaptainPuffy>: amnesiac kids*

*<CaptainPuffy>: they don't remember anything past the age of three*

*<awesamdude>: .*

*<awesamdude>: they what.*

*<CaptainPuffy>: yeah*

*<CaptainPuffy>: somehow*

*<awesamdude>: no seriously what.*

*<CaptainPuffy>: they're a handful*

*<CaptainPuffy>: dream got hyper after I fed them dessert*

*<CaptainPuffy>: kid was bouncing off the walls*

*<CaptainPuffy>: literally*

*<CaptainPuffy>: I'm talking pro parkour moves here*

*<CaptainPuffy>: nearly gave me a heart attack*

*<awesamdude>: puffy*

*<awesamdude>: why would you give them sugar*

*<CaptainPuffy>: BECAUSE*

***CaptainPuffy is typing. . .***

*<CaptainPuffy>: I have no excuse*

*<CaptainPuffy>: but anyways I NEED HLEP SAM*

*<CaptainPuffy>: i'm not the 1st person the kids ran into and i'm pretty sure someone tried to kill them*

*<CaptainPuffy>: or dream, at least*

*<CaptainPuffy>: my money's on the cabinet. found the kids near lmanberg territory and you know how they feel about dream*

*<awesamdude>: puffy*

*<CaptainPuffy>: I don't know what to do sam*

*<CaptainPuffy>: do I take care of them? do I try to turn them back?*

*<CaptainPuffy>: I don't even know if I can keep them safe*

<awesamdude>: are they at your house?

<CaptainPuffy>: yeah

<awesamdude>: heading over now. We'll talk more when I get there.

74. (inspired by uncreativeatnames)

"Tommy, don't panic, but I think we have a problem."

"I can't-- I can't feel my body what the fuck--"

"Calm down," Dream stressed, carefully sitting up. "This is. This is fine. Everything's going to be okay."

Tommy was very obviously not calming down, given the waves of panic Dream could feel from him. The panic spiked when he sat up and saw *himself*, lying facedown on the ground.

"*IS THAT ME?!?*" he shrieked. Dream winced. "*AM I DEAD? I DON'T REMEMBER DYING, DREAM, WHY DON'T I REMEMBER DYING I CAN'T FEEL MY BODY I'M--*"

"Calm. Down," Dream ordered. "You're in my head."

There was a pause as Tommy digested that. Then:

"*WHAT THE FUCK?!?*"

Dream winced, rubbing his temples. "Please shut up," he begged.

"*DON'T TELL ME TO FUCKING SHUT UP I'LL--*"

Dream did his best to ignore the screeching gremlin in his head, slowly getting to his feet. His balance and coordination seemed unaffected by whatever had happened to them, thankfully. He tried summoning something from his inventory, exhaling when the familiar weight of his sword graced his hand. Okay, so whatever this was hadn't affected his inventory either. He dispelled his sword and scanned his surroundings, doing his best to ignore Tommy's maybe-corpse lying at his feet.

They were at the edge of a forest, about ten feet away from where the treeline ended. A village was visible in the distance, though he couldn't see any villagers moving about. He rifled through his memories, trying to recall how they'd gotten there.

"Ah," he said aloud after a few seconds. "Okay. Okay. This is. Okay."

"*What? What's okay?*" Tommy called, breaking off from his rant. Dream ignored him, kneeling by Tommy's body and turning him over. "*Hey-- HEY-- what the hell do you think you're doing?!?*"

“Checking if you have a pulse,” Dream deadpanned. He pressed two fingers to Tommy’s neck, then poked him in the ribs. “Yep. You’re alive.”

*“Great, wonderful, why the fuck am I here and not in there?!”*

“We got attacked by a witch. Good news, she’s dead. Bad news, she got us with one last potion when you stabbed her, and now we’re stuck like this.”

A pause. *“I didn’t know witches could do shit like this.”*

“I didn’t either.” Dream rose to his feet. “She must have been a messed up potion or something. Looks like you have competition.”

*“Competition?”*

“For worst potion master.”

*“I’LL SHOW YOU WORST POTION MASTER, YOU--”*

And then Dream was suddenly falling back, a terrifying sense of numbness spreading across his body. His vision went dark for a moment before it reoriented, and when he tried to blink, his body didn’t respond.

“Oh,” Tommy said, turning his head to look down at himself. “Oh. Okay. I didn’t-- I didn’t mean to do that. Dream? You in there?”

*“What the fuck,”* Dream said aloud. His vocal cords did not respond to the movement.

“Okay, cool. You’re here.” Tommy tried to take a step forward, only to stumble. “Fuck, this feels so weird-- why are your legs short?”

*“Not all of us are gangly beanpoles,”* Dream snarked. *“Sorry to disappoint.”*

Tommy grumbled something and tried to take another step, arms outstretched to keep himself balanced. He was considerably more successful this time, and within a minute or so, was able to maintain a relatively stable walk. He circled back around to where his body was lying, then proceeded to stare at it.

*“What are you doing?”*

“Trying to get back into my body.”

*“By staring at it?”*

“I’m projecting my soul through my brainwaves.”

*“So by staring at it.”*

“Fuck off.”

Dream settled back as much as he could without a physical body, trying to get used to the unsettling feeling. Slowly, he reached out, pushing his mental presence upwards. It felt a bit like swimming through ink, and then he was suddenly breaking the surface, snapping back into his body--

“Woah,” he gasped, staggering forward. “That was. Something.”

“*Watch it!*” Tommy barked. Dream looked down and realized he was literally inches away from stepping on Tommy’s arm. He hastily backpedaled.

“Sorry,” he breathed, dropping down to lean against a tree. “. . . Fuck. What do we do?”

“*Fix this,*” Tommy deadpanned.

“Thank you for your input, Sherlock. And how are we supposed to do that?”

Tommy gave the distinct impression of grimacing. “. . . *Throw shit into a potion stand and hope it works?*”

“Yeah, no,” Dream decided. “You’d probably blow us up.”

“*Then what the hell do we do?*”

“Ask for help.”

A pause. “*Dream, that’s a terrible idea.*”

“Better than yours.”

“*Fuck you.*”

“Am I wrong?”

Tommy remained silent.

“Exactly.”

“*And who exactly are we supposed to ask for help? Technoblade hates my guts.*”

“L’Manberg?”

“*L’Manberg hates **your** guts, and in case you forgot, I’m exiled.*”

“They still care about you, Tommy. They won’t kill me as long as you’re in my head. . . unless they think that’s the solution for getting you out, but hopefully we can talk them out of it.”

“. . . *Real assuring, big man.*”

Dream snorted. Without fanfare he pushed himself to his feet, slung Tommy’s body over his shoulder, and set off in the direction of L’Manberg.

---

In hindsight, strolling into L'Manberg with Tommy's unconscious body might not have been the best idea.

"What the hell did you do?" Quackity snarled, his axe pointed at Dream's face. "What the *hell did you do?*"

"I didn't do anything," Dream placated, his hands raised in the air.

"Bullshit." Quackity's axe inched closer to Dream's mask. "Hand him over. Now."

"Okay, okay!" Dream hastily handed Tommy over to a bristling Fundy. "Look, if you just let me expl-- wOAH!"

He ducked just as Quackity tried to take his head off with the axe. Quackity took quick advantage of his surprise, knocking him onto his back and planting a foot on his chest. He levelled the axe at Dream. "What did you do to him?" he snarled.

Dream stared up at him, unprepared for the sudden flare of panic that blossomed in his ribcage. He desperately buried his fingers in the grass, trying to ground himself, but he could already hear the dripping of crying obsidian and Quackity's laughter as he--

Tommy surged forward, wresting control from him. Dream gladly let him take it, retreating from the memories like his life depended on it.

"Prime fucking damnit big Q," Tommy snapped. "Just give us a second to explain, will you?"

Quackity recoiled, eyes widening. Tommy took advantage of his shock, rushing on to explain.

"Listen, I'm Tommy. We had a run-in with a witch. She did something-- I don't know *how*, but now we're stuck in the same body and it fucking *sucks*."

Quackity stared at him like he'd grown a second head. "... You really expect me to believe that?"

Tommy let out a huff of air. "The day I got exiled, I told Fundy he looked nice in his suit."

A pause. "You did?" Fundy asked blankly.

"Ughhhhhhhh," Tommy groaned. He let his head flop back against the ground. "What the fuck do I need to tell you to get you to believe me?"

"*Maybe something from the pre-revolution era,*" Dream suggested. "*Something Fundy would recognize.*"

“Uh. Your mom is a salmon,” Tommy told Fundy. Fundy’s face went through a series of strange expressions, eventually settling on *what the fuck*.

“How did you know that?” he demanded.

*“Fundy’s mom is a what?”*

“You told me when we were shrinking Eret’s tower,” Tommy deadpanned, completely ignoring Dream. “With Jack. Remember?”

“Wait,” Quackity said, apparently connecting the dots. “Wait, your-- Wilbur-- he-- with a *salmon?*”

*“That was the only thing you could think of as proof?!”* Fundy shrieked.

“Deal with it,” Tommy snapped. “So do you believe me now?”

“Take off your mask,” Quackity ordered, his axe wavering. Tommy rolled his eyes and complied, shoving the mask to one side of his head. Dream shifted uneasily in the back of his mind but remained silent.

The two L’Manbergians stared at him. “His eyes are blue,” Fundy whispered.

*“Wait, they are?”* Dream rose a bit, as if he could see his own eyes. Tommy sent him the mental equivalent of a warning look and he sunk back down. *“So our eyes are probably indicators,”* he mused. *“I can see what’s happening right now, so it’s not dependent on awareness, thank Prime. Does it change depending on who’s in control?”*

“Are they not usually?” Quackity hissed.

“Dream’s eyes are supposed to be green.”

“Color contacts.”

“But he knew about my mom, and-- and he has Tommy’s accent.”

Quackity glanced at Fundy, then lowered his axe and stepped back. Tommy sat up, rubbing his back. “Stupid fuckin’ rocks digging into my spine,” he muttered.

Quackity eyed him. “Wait, so Dream’s really. . .”

Tommy rapped his head with a fist. “He’s in my noggin, yeah.”

Fundy looked disturbed. “Can he. . . can he hear us?”

Tommy hesitated. To lie or not to lie?

*“Say no,”* Dream advised. *“If we tell them the truth, they might try to lock us up until they figure out how to separate us.”*

“No,” Tommy said. “Sometimes we can see things at the same time, but he’s too busy panicking right now to focus.”

Fundy’s tail waved uneasily. “Panicking?”

“Near death experiences tend to make him do that, yes,” Tommy deadpanned. “Anyways, do you have any food? I’m fuckin’ starving, man. We just got mindbent via potion and it was *shit*.”

“A potion?” Quackity’s eyes narrowed. “Is that why you’re like this?”

“I already told you, there was a witch. So. Food?”

Quackity and Fundy exchanged glances, appearing to have a silent conversation. At last Fundy looked away and sighed, adjusting his grip on Tommy’s body. “We should probably take Tommy-- er-- you-- your body? To a hospital first.” He grimaced. “Prime, this is weird.”

“You’re not the one having an out-of-body experience right now,” Tommy scoffed. “Fine then, we’ll go to the stupid-ass hospital--”

“And we need to talk to Tubbo,” Quackity added. “We’ll need to take advantage of this, since Dream is. . . indisposed right now. How long do you think he’ll stay unaware?”

“I can keep him down for a couple hours, probably,” Tommy said. “I’ll let you know when he can hear shit again.”

“Wait,” Fundy blurted. “Does that-- does that mean he can keep you down too?” Quackity stiffened, obviously realizing the implications of this.

Tommy shrugged. “Dunno. If I start acting funny or threatening you all or somethin’, know that it’s Dream, got it?”

“Or your eyes will turn green again,” Fundy pointed out.

“Or my eyes will turn green again,” Tommy agreed. His stomach growled loudly and he flushed, crossing his arms at the looks he received. “What? I said I was hungry!”

“Let’s get going then,” Quackity decided, turning around and setting off down the path at a brisk pace. “The sooner we get T-- your body to the hospital, the sooner you get food.”

“Fuck yes,” Tommy declared as he hurried after him, ignoring Fundy’s cry for them to wait up. This loop was gonna be *fun*.

## 75.

He was in the darkness, surrounded by the void, consumed in the nothingness even as his very being unraveled. He was everything and nothing, everywhere and nowhere at once, galaxies and worlds bursting into existence and crumbling to ashes before his eyes. It *hurt*,



hurt like nothing he had ever felt before, and he would have screamed if he could, but the darkness had swallowed his voice, and what little consciousness he had left could not comprehend anything but *everything*. He was in awe. He was in agony. No mortal should have ever laid eyes on the secrets of the universe, the sheer magnitude of it all. He was being torn, pieces chipped away little by little--

And then there was a flash of light, maybe two, and he was being glued back together, gravity pulling tight the strings of his fractured mind. Memories of agony faded into forgotten echoes. The void fled from him, aching nothingness dissipating as he was reassembled, bit by bit, until he was *himself*, him, whole and only a little broken. He marveled at the feeling of stability, of being *solid*.

The universe tugged. He resisted-- he needed more *time*, more time to gather his thoughts, to realize his new state of existence-- but the universe never listened to anyone.

He was catapulted headfirst into reality.

---

One moment, the room was empty.

In the next, he appeared, wild-eyed and covered in ash, clutching his midsection. "Ow," he groaned, staggering. A glance at the makeshift calendar pinned on the wall confirmed his suspicions. "Ha. . . looks like. . . looks like it worked."

With his remaining strength he hobbled to the wall and sank down against it, letting his legs fall out in front of him. His hands trembled. He tugged lightly at the edge of his shirt, tried to lift it up, then cried out in pain. "Okay," he panted. "Maybe. . . maybe not such a great idea. Where are the regen pots when you need them?"

He eyed the chests set at the opposite end of the room, then closed his eyes and let out a defeated sigh. His head fell back against the wall. Minutes trickled by, marked by the clock hanging over his head. *Tick-tock-tick-tock-tick-tock*.

"I'm gonna die," he muttered at last. "Sorry to whoever finds my corpse here. Can't even say it's a pretty one."

*Tick-tock-tick-tock*.

His breathing stuttered and he coughed, grimacing as blood leaked from the corner of his mouth. "I really messed up," he told the empty room. "Dunno how things are going to go from now."

"That was a lie," he amended seconds later, settling back against the wall. "It's-- gonna go bad. I've doomed this timeline. Can't. . . can't even do anything about it." Frustrated tears welled in his eyes. "I'm *useless*."

*Tick-tock-tick-tock.*

Without warning, he barked out a harsh laugh, body trembling with the effort of sustaining the noise. “Prime,” he wheezed. His bloodied fingers clawed at the carpet. “I ruined *everything*-- this one chance and I can’t--”

He cut himself off abruptly and closed his eyes, listening as though someone was replying to him. “Stupid,” he muttered. “I gave him all the time in the world. What-- do you think he’s-- gonna do?”

*Tick-tock.*

He hesitated, chin sinking down to rest on his chest. “Hope-- is useless,” he choked out. “But. . . it’s the only-- thing-- I-- *hah*-- have left.”

*Tick-tock-tick.*

He laughed again, the sound catching in his throat and coming out as a weak cough. “Well,” he rasped, “Never thought-- I’d be trusting-- *Dream* of all people. ’S up. . . to them. . . I guess.”

*Tock.*

He blinked, gaze growing distant. His labored breathing stuttered, stopped, and failed to start again. The clock hands inched onwards, unmoved by the corpse cooling on the ground below.

*Tick-tock-tick-tock-tick-tok-ti--*

***Tick--***

Time shuddered. Time rewound. Time folded back on itself and he was gone like he’d never existed.

---

Agony. Darkness. A flash of light. Crashing back into existence at breakneck speeds. His knees nearly gave out and he stumbled, catching himself on a wall.

“Ow,” he groaned. Looked up. “Ha. . . looks like. . . looks like it worked.”

He slowly sank down against the wall, letting his legs fall out in front of him. His hands were shaking. He tried to lift the edge of his shirt, only to yelp and drop it. “Okay,” he wheezed. “Maybe. . . maybe not such a great idea. Where are the regen pots when you need them?”

*Tick-tock.* In the silence of the room, the clock sounded so much louder. A sudden wave of *deja vu* overtook him. He blinked then shook his head, laughing dryly.

“I’m gonna die,” he muttered. “Sorry to whoever finds my corpse in here. Can’t even say it’s a pretty corpse.”

*Tick-tock-tick-tock.*

“I really messed up,” he told the empty room. “Dunno how things are going to go from now. . . that was a lie.”

He slumped against the wall. “It’s-- gonna go bad. I’ve doomed this timeline. Can’t. . . can’t even do anything about it.” His hands curled into fists. “I’m *useless*.”

*Tick-tock-tick-tock.*

He threw his head back and laughed, only to choke on the noise as it turned into a sob. “Prime,” he groaned. “I ruined *everything*-- the one chance I had and I can’t--”

Time shuddered. Time rewound. Time folded back on itself and he was gone like he’d never existed.

---

Darkness. Light. The clock rewound.

Darkness. Light. The clock rewound.

Darkness. Light. The clock--

Over, and over, and over, the cycle went on. Three loopers went back again, and again, and again. The first and the second remembered these resets.

The third did not.

## Chapter End Notes

Added a plot-relevant loops chapter in the encyclopedia (thanks to kalkiesoo for giving me the idea!) It doesn't contain ALL the plot-relevant loops, only the ones that are outright plot-relevant. Will add the less outright ones as the fic goes on since it'll eventually become pointless to try to hide stuff.

Also do you like the ciphers or should I start putting down the notes as plaintext  
In other news! This beautiful [fanart](#) by lostinnit\_. Wilbur going ‘wat’ I’m laughing so hard--

Also we got a new inspired fic! It’s lovely, go check it out.

**Loop Notes**

**72.** Sleep-deprived loopers may be chaotic, but not-sleep-deprived loopers are chaotic and have the intelligence to back up their chaos. By the end of the week, nearly every civilization on the server had been glitter bombed. Only Snowchester was spared.

74. Tommy was Very Upset to discover that Dream's body was faster than his despite the fact that his legs were a bit shorter than Tommy's. He did, however, put the running skills to good use (read: run from a vengeful Technoblade after he dyed all his dogs pink "to match your theme!")

[illegible]

# Chapter 16

## Chapter Notes

hi hello it is late and i am pretending to be asleep bcs my parents don't want me to be awake rn but i wanted to post this chapter before i went to sleep so here i am. brain not functioning rn  
also happy early 11/16. wheeeeeee

### Spotlighted Comments

**SunFlarerito:** Loop 71 is the best loop and nobody can tell me otherwise. Dream with his flashy trivia game stage which blows up into glitter when you get an answer wrong.  
**I\_dont\_need\_sleep\_I\_need\_answers:** Aww hey look at these fun loops WHAT THE ACTUALLY FUCK-

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

### 76. *(credit to RedWing336)*

“Uh, Eret. I don’t think I’m gonna fit in there.”

Eret looked at Tommy, looked at the narrow corridor leading to the final control room, then looked back at Tommy. “Ah. Couldn’t you. . . get out?”

Tommy crossed his arms. “Couldn’t you bring the weapons to me?” he countered.

Eret smiled nervously. “We might not be able to get them all in one go--”

“For fuck’s sake,” Wilbur interrupted. “Just get out of the stupid hamster ball.”

Tommy adopted a mutinous expression and took a step back. The giant plastic ball he was standing in rolled with the movement. “Can’t make me, bitch.”

“I think I can,” Wilbur returned, drawing his iron sword. “Shall we test that?”

Tommy bared his teeth. “Bring it.”

---

“I don’t think I’m going to fit in there.”

“Can’t you just. . . get out of the hamster ball?” George asked, eyes darting between Dream and the tiny space they were supposed to be hiding in. Dream shook his head.

“I told you, getting out isn’t an option.” He glanced around the final control room. “If I just. . . stood in the corner, do you think they would notice me?”

“Pretty sure they would, yes,” Punz deadpanned.

Dream frowned. “But are you *really* sure?”

Sapnap shuffled over to a wall and calmly began banging his head on it.

*77. remix, pt. 3 ([see previous parts of this loop here](#))*

Fundy grimaced, glancing over his shoulder. If Tubbo caught him in here, there would be *questions*, and Fundy wasn’t sure if he could come up with a convincing lie. He had to do this quickly.

Pulling open another cabinet, his eyes fell on *Court Documents*. Convenient. He snatched the folder up and rifled through it, pulling out the ‘evidence’ Tommy had used to pin the burning of George’s house on Dream. A glance-over proved that it was the real deal, and he quickly shoved it into his inventory before covering up all traces of his presence in the office. He had just shut the cabinet when the office door opened behind him, and he whipped around, forcing his bristling tail to relax.

“Fundy?” Tubbo blinked at him. “What are you doing in my office?”

“I was looking for you,” Fundy lied.

Tubbo waited, obviously expecting Fundy to explain. When the fox hybrid failed to do so, he raised an eyebrow. “. . . and why were you looking for me?”

“To talk about something.”

The second eyebrow rose to join the first. “And that would be. . .?”

“I forgot.” Fundy met Tubbo’s skeptical gaze head-on, praying to all heavens that Tubbo wouldn’t notice his shaking hands.

“You forgot,” Tubbo repeated.

Fundy bobbed his head. “Uh-huh. Yep. You know me. Always forgetting things.”

Tubbo held his gaze for a moment longer, then snorted and rolled his eyes. “I think that’s Ranboo.”

“Never know, his memory problems might be contagious.” Fundy smiled sheepishly. “I think I’m gonna go home. Some sleep might help.”

“You do that,” Tubbo muttered, crossing the room and falling into his office chair with a huff. “I’ll be in here doing *taxes*.”

Fundy winced sympathetically. “Good luck.”

“Thanks.” Tubbo began sorting through his papers, a clear act of dismissal. Fundy fled the room as quickly as he could.

---

Fundy never thought that he’d one day be stealing a confidential court document, but it was necessary. Tubbo hadn’t said much about what occurred during his talk with Tommy a week ago, but the first thing he’d done at the next meeting was to instate Quackity as interim vice-president, which basically meant that he’d be the vice until Tommy finished. . . whatever he needed to do.

Which added onto the list of Very Suspicious Things pertaining to Tommy. Following the court case, the L’Manberg Cabinet (minus Tommy) had gathered to discuss the proceedings. Quackity had made an offhanded joke about the possibility of Tommy blackmailing Dream, which was quickly brushed off. After all, what could Tommy possibly threaten Dream with?

Thing was, when Fundy had actually taken time to sit back and review the court case, he’d realized that the joke had more merit than expected. It would explain Dream’s sudden change in behavior and his subdued temperament for the remainder of the trial. Fundy was still blanking on what Tommy could have blackmailed Dream with, but everything else lined up. Which was why he’d snuck into Tubbo’s office to take a peek at the court documents.

Safe in the confines of his home, Fundy squinted at the paper he’d stolen. Dream had only changed his story after he’d stared at the picture for a good ten seconds, and though that could have been chalked up to him being dumbfounded by the sheer ridiculousness of it all, Fundy suspected that there was more to it.

Yup, just as he thought. Right at the edge of the picture, inscribed in ink--

:L·JL·JL:::·T·J | 4J | K. !;tJ|| JtJr -l. J:: L·t·L.

Gah. His Enchantment was pretty rusty. *Rme--* was that a m? No, it was a e. Right, the next letter was m. He'd gotten them mixed up. And that was a t, not a s. . . so the entire thing said. . .

*Remember what I said. Play along. Or else.*

Fundy’s elation at his successful translation disappeared in a flash. His ears pressed flat against his skull. Because no matter how he looked at it, that phrasing seemed pretty threatening.

What the hell was Tommy doing?

**78.** *adoption arc, pt. 6 ([see previous parts of this loop here](#))*

“No.”

“Yes,” Tubbo countered. “Join us.”

“No,” Tommy snapped. He turned, only to stop dead in his tracks when Purpled appeared, blocking his path. “Oh fuck, you’re in on this too?”

“Join us,” Purpled deadpanned. His face was perfectly blank, but Tommy could see the amusement shining in his eyes. “We have cookies.”

“I don’t care about your shitty cookies,” Tommy grumbled. He pushed past Purpled and strode deeper into the forest.

“You might wanna stop, Tommy,” Tubbo called. Tommy rolled his eyes and sped up--

--and promptly tripped over a wire. The trap went off and a net snapped up around Tommy, yanking him kicking and cursing into the branches of a tree.

“What the fuck!” he shrieked, flailing blindly. The branch the net was hanging from creaking dangerously.

“I warned you,” Tubbo chirped. He skipped over to the net and looked up at Tommy, tilting his head to the side. “So. Join us?”

“Fuck no!” Tommy howled, clawing at the net with his hands. “Lemme out! Purpled! I’ll give you a diamond if you get me out!”

Purpled hummed. “Nah.”

“Whaddya mean ‘nah’?!” Tommy spluttered. Purpled shrugged.

Ranboo burst into the clearing, eyes blown wide with alarm. “What’s happening?” he called. “I heard Tommy screaming and--” he stared at the scene, then turned to Tubbo. “What are you doing? Why is Tommy in a net?”

“We’re trying to get Tommy to sign his adoption papers,” Tubbo answered, holding up a sheaf of papers. Ranboo squinted at them.

“Uh. Those are the adoption papers?”

“Yep.”

Ranboo blinked slowly. ““I certify that Dream’s my brother now lol’,” he read aloud.



Tubbo's grin widened. "Yep. And the rest of the packet is just a description of the risks of adopting Tommy."

Ranboo glanced between Tubbo and Tommy, who was glaring at all of them from within the net. ". . . Why are we trying to coerce Tommy into signing adoption papers?"

"Dream's birthday is tomorrow," Purpled explained. "We thought this would be a nice present."

"Ah," Ranboo said. He turned to Tommy. "C'mon Tommy, do something nice for Dream."

"*Never*," Tommy hissed. "*Let me out*."

"Just sign it," Tubbo coaxed, holding the adoption papers up towards the net. Tommy snatched the papers from his grasp, ripped them in half, and threw it back in his face. Tubbo didn't bat an eye as he pulled out another packet of adoption papers and held them up. These, too, met an untimely demise, balled up into wads and tossed at Ranboo's head.

"Just so you know," Purpled cut in, "both Tubbo and I maxed out our inventories with copies of these. We have another twenty or so stacks hidden in strategic locations around the SMP. Just sign it, Tommy. Resistance is futile."

"You know, taken out of context, that could sound very bad."

"Shut up, Ranboo. Nobody asked for your opinion."

"Wow, *okay*."

Tommy huffed, his gaze calculating. ". . . If I sign the stupid papers, will you let me out?"

"Yup!" Tubbo promised. "I swear it on the bees!"

"Oh, he swore on the *bees*," Purpled whispered loudly. "He's *serious*."

Tommy rolled his eyes and snatched the papers from Tubbo. "I need a pen," he grumbled.

"Wait," Ranboo said suddenly. "Wait, is that why you told me to fill my inventory with quills?"

"Maybe," Tubbo chirped. "Give him a pen, Ranboo."

Ranboo stared at him for a long moment. "*This* is why I spent an entire day grinding for ink?"

"It's for Dream!" Tubbo said, like that justified everything.

"C'mon, Ranboo," Tommy mocked, parroting his words from earlier, "do something nice for Dream."

Ranboo groaned and pulled a quill from his inventory, handing it to Tommy. Tommy begrudgingly scribbled a messy signature before he threw the papers and pen at Tubbo. Tubbo caught them before they could whack him in the face, grinning widely.

“Thank you for your cooperation,” he chirped. “Purpled, if you will.”

Purpled winced. “Uh. I don’t have any weapons on me right now.” At Tubbo’s judgmental stare, he threw his hands into the air. “Maxed out my inventory with adoption papers, remember?!”

Tubbo turned to Ranboo, who shook his head. “Sorry, I left all my pointy objects at home today.”

“Should I be worried?”

“Dream!” Tubbo whirled around, the adoption papers disappearing into his inventory with a flash. “Hello!”

“Hi,” Dream replied, looking amused. He glanced between Tommy and the three teenagers standing under him. “. . . are you trying to kill Tommy?”

“No!”

“Yes!”

“Maybe.”

Ranboo turned to Tubbo and Purpled with a *look*. Dream suppressed a laugh and waved a hand. “Carry on, then.”

“You *bastard!*” Tommy exploded, flailing angrily. “I am going to murder you so hard--”

“We can’t,” Tubbo lamented over Tommy’s furious shouting. “We don’t have any pointy objects. Could you give us one of yours?”

Dream eyed the children contemplatively for a moment, then shrugged and held out his sword. “Thanks!” Tubbo cheered, snatching it. He raced over to the net.

“Stay the fuck away from me!” Tommy shrieked. Tubbo ignored him, slashing the sword through the netting. Tommy fell through in a mess of tangled limbs and rope, hitting the ground with an *oomph*. He lay there, dazed, for all of two seconds before he scrambled to his feet and lunged at Tubbo. Tubbo danced out of the way, leaving Ranboo straight in Tommy’s path. The enderman hybrid froze like a deer in headlights, tail fluffing out, just as Tommy bowled him over. The two rolled across the ground, somehow ending up with Tommy pinning Ranboo to the floor in a chokehold.

“Gimme the adoption papers, or I snap his neck,” Tommy threatened.

“Go ahead,” Purpled said smugly. “We already got what we needed.”

“The-- *betrayal*,” Ranboo wheezed, trying fruitlessly to push himself off the ground. Tommy pulled harder on his neck and he gave up, flopping to the ground.

“. . . Adoption papers?” Dream asked.

“Adoption papers,” Tubbo confirmed happily.

Tommy’s eyes widened and he yanked at Ranboo, eliciting a weak choking noise. “Don’t you dare, Tubbo--”

“Here!” Tubbo shoved the signed sheaf of papers in Dream’s direction. “We were gonna give these to you tomorrow, but I guess now works too! Happy early birthday!”

Tommy abandoned all pretense of murdering Ranboo and lunged for the two, but Purpled was faster. He stuck his foot out and tripped Tommy, then proceeded to sit on his back while Tommy flailed and cursed at him. Dream, meanwhile, was flipping through the packet, a strange expression on his face.

“‘Possible loss of hearing’?” He asked. “‘Extreme exhaustion to the point of passing out’? ‘A one hundred percent chance of death’?”

“All life eventually comes to an end,” Tubbo said, sounding like he was trying to channel his inner Master Oogway. “Oh, and the loss of hearing thing is because of Tommy’s very large lung capacity.”

Both of them looked over to Tommy, who was still screaming obscenities at Purpled. “I see,” Dream said dryly. He looked back down at the papers, running an eye over the messy signature, then raised his voice. “Aww, I didn’t know you cared, Tommy.”

Tommy paused in his tirade for a moment, head whipping around. “FUCK YOU!” he howled, doubling his efforts to wiggle free. “FUCK YOU, YOU ABSOLUTE ASSHOLE--”

“Love you too,” Dream sang, waving the signed adoption paper around. Tommy spluttered, so angry that he was completely unable to form words.

“I hate you so much,” he informed Dream with a sort of bewildered fury.

“I know,” Dream said.

“I hope you die in a hole.”

“Uh-huh.”

“You are the absolute worst.”

“If you say so.”

Tommy groaned and let his head drop to the ground. “. . . I want an infinite supply of cookies,” he grumbled at last. “If you’re gonna adopt me, you’re gonna hafta *pay* me.”

Dream grinned. "That can be arranged."

**79.**

"Dream, I found a secret room!"

"You did?" Dream called back. He hurried over to the destroyed section of wall Tommy was standing by, peering through the gap. "Huh. An X room."

"You grab the cobblestone," Tommy ordered, brushing past him. "I'm gonna go look at the chest."

"I told you," Dream grumbled as he followed, "You can get cobblestone in other places."

"But this cobblestone is *rare*, Dream," Tommy insisted. "It's *special*. Woodland Mansion cobblestone sells for a higher price!"

"Tommy, it's just cobblestone."

"You're just too uncultured to tell the difference," Tommy sniffed. He pushed the chest open. "Now let's see what-- oh."

Dream looked up from where he was prying a block of cobblestone from the wall. "Tommy?"

"*Oh*," Tommy repeated. The shock on his face slowly morphed into a wide grin. "Oh my *Prime*."

Slowly, reverently, he lifted a Glock G43 semiautomatic from the chest. Dream stared at it for a long moment. "What the fuck," he deadpanned.

Tommy turned to him, an unholy glint in his eye. Dream took a step back. "No," he said. "*No*."

Tommy cackled, flicking the safety on his new gun off. "Better start running, bitch boy."

**80.**

Cold obsidian against his back. Dim light warming one side of his face. The smell of damp stone.

Without opening his eyes, Tommy could already tell where he was.

*No*, a distant part of his mind shrieked. *Prime, please, anywhere but this.*

The first time he'd woken up in the past, he'd thought it was a blessing. Dream had still been in prison, and Tommy had wasted no time getting Sam to make sure he *stayed* there. Then he'd gone off to Snowchester and retired from, well, *everything*. He'd built himself a little

cabin at the edge of the area. Signed up for therapy with Puffy, alongside Tubbo, Ranboo and Ghostbur. He earned the title of Michael's favorite uncle, taking care of the kid when Ranboo or Tubbo were occupied. He learned to grow and heal and move on.

And then he'd woken up in the past again, this time sitting next to Tubbo on the bench. He'd freaked Tubbo out, frantically demanding to know if Dream was in prison. His friend had been quick to assure him that Dream had just been locked in, that he wouldn't escape. Tommy had believed him and vowed to stay far away from the prison, only to receive the news two days after when he would have visited in the original timeline that Technoblade had broken Dream out. He'd run to Snowchester in a panic, finding Tubbo and Ranboo bundling Michael down into a bunker. After three sleepless nights, huddled together in that bunker, he'd finally passed out from exhaustion.

And woken up in the past for the third time. He'd marched out of his house and screamed profanities at the sky for five minutes straight. It was Ranboo who found him, sobbing on his own front lawn, Mellohi's shards lying at his feet. The rest of that loop passed in a blur, ending with a flash of pink hair and blinding, searing pain.

And now he was waking up in a prison cell with the man who beat him to death four loops ago.

"Fuck," he groaned, opening his eyes. Dream sat curled against the wall opposite him, head down. His tangled, oily hair obscured his face. Good. If Tommy ever saw the bastard's smirk again, it would be too soon.

He pushed himself to his feet and faced the lava. "SAM!" he called, already knowing it would be futile. In the original timeline he'd screamed for the warden until his voice went hoarse. The warden had never replied until *after* Dream beat him to death, and given the lack of blood decorating the cell, Tommy had looped in before that.

Wonderful.

"SAM!" he screamed again. No reply. In the corner of his eye, Dream shifted, one dull green eye becoming visible under the curtain of hair. The bastard remained silent, watching as Tommy shouted the warden's name over and over.

"It's useless," he said at last. Tommy jerked, spinning around to face him, his hands curled into fists.

"Shut the fuck up," he ordered. Dream let out a quiet huff.

"It's useless," he repeated. "He's not going to come."

Tommy squinted at him, half-tempted to flip him off and scream for Sam again. But there was something *off* about the way Dream said it. He didn't sound like he was gloating. No, he sounded. . . tired. Defeated.

"The fuck is up with you?" Tommy blurted. Dream blinked, obviously not expecting the question. "Why do you sound so tired and shit? What happened to all the 'he's not gonna

save you, Tommy? You're stuck with me?"

Dream rolled his eyes. "Maybe I got tired of gloating."

Tommy snorted. "Yeah, right."

Dream shrugged and went back to inspecting the floor. Tommy eyed him with suspicion for a moment, then stalked over to the chest in the corner and yanked it open. He grabbed a book, stomped back over to his spot opposite Dream, and plopped down. Opening it to the first page, he ripped it out and began folding.

He felt eyes on him and tensed, looking up. Dream was watching him. "What?" Tommy snapped.

"What are you doing?" Dream asked.

"None of your business."

Dream hummed but didn't look away. Tommy tried to get back into folding, but he couldn't focus with Dream staring at him. He sent the man a glare. "Do you mind?"

Dream's gaze darted to the book. "Can I have a page?"

"Get your own book," Tommy said. He went back to folding.

Dream let out a quiet sigh and slowly pushed himself to his feet. Tommy tensed, fingers freezing on the crease he was making. Shit, he shouldn't have antagonized Dream. He should've just given Dream what he wanted, damnit. But he hadn't, and now Dream was going to kill him. Again.

But Dream didn't approach Tommy or start talking to him in that sickly-sweet voice he used so often in exile. Instead he shuffled to the chest, giving Tommy a wide berth. Tommy kept his eyes fixed on his own paper, refusing to relax until Dream sat back down, book in hand. The other man ripped out a piece of paper and began folding.

Slowly, Tommy resumed his own work. For a long time, the only sounds in the cell were the crinkling of paper and the bubbling of lava. It was kinda. . . relaxing, in a way. Disgustingly so. Tommy couldn't have that.

He eyed one of the completed paper airplanes lying by his leg. *Don't do it*, a voice in the back of his head warned. *You know what happened last time you annoyed him.*

Tommy decided the voice could go fuck itself. "Hey bitch," he called. Dream looked up just in time to get a paper airplane to the face. Tommy watched in amusement as the prisoner reeled back, head whacking against the obsidian wall.

"Ow! Fuck!" Dream pitched forward, clutching his eye. "What the hell was that for?!"

"For being a bitch," Tommy quipped, ignoring the frantic *HE'S ANGRY! ABORT! ABORT!* going on in the back of his head. "Bitch."

Dream stared at him for a long moment, then went back to folding his own paper.

Tommy scowled and threw another paper airplane at him. It flew through the air in a graceful arc and bounced harmlessly off Dream's head. The man flinched but didn't look up, focusing on his paper. Tommy threw another paper airplane. And then another. Dream's eye twitched. Tommy grinned.

The grin slid off his face when a clunking sound echoed through the cell. Both prisoners looked up as the tiny metal door in the wall slid up, revealing several potatoes.

"Lunchtime," Dream muttered, getting to his feet. Tommy remained seated, watching as Dream collected the potatoes from the slot. The other man dropped most of the potatoes on the lectern, grabbing two. He turned to Tommy and held one out. "Here."

Tommy tried to reach out to take it, but his hands wouldn't move. He was sitting on the ground and Dream was standing over him, a potato in hand. His breathing quickened. "I--" he croaked. "I'm not taking shit from you, bitch."

Dream's gaze strayed to his shaking hands. Something like realization dawned in his eyes. "Tommy," he said slowly. "Tommy, have we done this before?"

Tommy felt the blood drain from his face. He stared up at Dream and remained silent.

"You're back too," Dream said. He took a step forward. "You came back too."

"No," Tommy whispered. The world was falling out from under him, and horrible, *terrible* coldness was spreading through his stomach. "*No*. Anyone but you."

"Are you in a loop?" Dream asked. Another step forward. "Is this your fourth time too?"

"Stay away," Tommy choked out, his voice rising. He pressed himself into the wall. "Stay the *fuck* away from me!"

Dream stopped in his tracks. His gaze travelled down to the potato he was still gripping in one hand. "Ah," he said. He dropped the potato and kicked it away. Tommy watched as it rolled across the cell, disappearing behind the lectern.

"I'm not going to hurt you," Dream tried.

"Shut the fuck up."

Dream didn't shut up. "Tommy, you're-- we're trapped in a time loop, right?"

Tommy squeezed his eyes shut. "Stop. Stop talking."

"That's what's happening to you, right? This is the fourth time--"

"*Stop*."

"We can work together, Tommy, if we work together we can break out--"

“I SAID, SHUT UP!”

Dream paused. Tommy realized distantly that he was crying, eyes staring straight through the man who had murdered him three timelines ago. He felt like he was falling, strangled with never ending panic. His hands clawed at his chest as the same, terrible fact repeated again and again in his mind.

*Dream is also in a time loop.*

Dream, who killed him. Who forced Tubbo to exile him. Who-- who--

*“It’s okay to call it abuse,”* Puffy had told him two timelines ago, when he'd finally opened up to her during their fifth session. *“It’s not a weakness to admit that you were abused, Tommy.”*

Who abused him.

And now Tommy was stuck in a thrice-damned timeloop with him.

His ears were ringing, the haunting sound that followed every explosion. He breathed in and tasted smoke. Every loop started at a different time. How long would it be until one started in exile?

*“Put your things in the hole, Tommy.”*

“Please,” he whispered, shakily reaching up to clutch his head in a pathetic attempt to shield himself. He didn’t know who he was begging. “Please, no. *Please.*”

There was no one around to hear him. No one except the one man he had never wanted to see again.

And now he was trapped with him. Alone. In a time loop for the rest of eternity.

Tommy dug his nails into his skin and *screamed*.

## Chapter End Notes

aha that escalated quickly

Anyways. [Floor is lava fanart](#) by marbledmarigold. Beautiful. I am in joy. The way it deteriorates just makes it even funnier--

ALSO NEW INSPIRED FIC GO CHECK IT OUT

### **Loop Notes**

**78.** And thus, the adoption arc is completed.

**79.** At least he’s getting good practice for the next manhunt.

**80.** So it begins.





# Chapter 17

## Chapter Notes

Happy thanksgiving to everyone who lives on this side of the pond

### Spotlighted Comments

**Crystalcatgamer:** It has been a thousand years (months) since we (readers) last saw (read) the sun (Fluff and crack and where everything was beautiful and there was no Plot)

Also props to **And Then There Was Angst** for their analysis on the last loop last chapter and also because the anonymous username they chose was very apt and had me laughing

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

### 81. *(credit to QueenQuinn)*

Dream stepped through the portal and was greeted with a scream of “MERRY CHRISTMAS, BITCH!” and a large object headed straight towards his face. Years of experience allowed him to duck rather than freeze, but the projectile still clipped him in the head and sent him sprawling on the ground.

“Oh shit!” Hurried footsteps. “Big man, you good?”

Dream groaned and pushed himself into a sitting position. “What. . . what was that for?”

Tommy had the decency to look sheepish. “Your, uh, Christmas present.”

“My--” Dream turned to look at the package lying in the snow. It was wrapped in modest brown parchment paper and tied with twine. “. . . you got me a present?”

“Just open it,” Tommy huffed. Dream struggled to his feet and dusted the snow from his clothes, then retrieved the package. After a minute of struggling with the twine (“Just pull the fucking strings-- have you never seen a bow before?!”), he managed to peel the parchment away, revealing. . . a pile of black cloth.

Dream stuffed the wrapping into his inventory, then shook out his new present. It was a hoodie, completely black save for the white reset symbol stitched over the heart.

“Did you. . . make this yourself?”

“Damn right I did,” Tommy huffed. “Took me *ages*.”

Dream turned the hoodie over in his hands. “This is. . . this is amazing, Tommy. Thank you.”

Tommy grinned. “I made it, of course it’s amazing! Plus, it’s about time you wore something that wasn’t bright green. Dunno who taught you fashion, but it’s the ugliest thing I’ve seen since Schlatt’s face.”

“It’s not that bad!”

“It really is. Which is *why* I took the creative liberty of making you something in a different color. It physically pained me to make you *another* fucking hoodie, but I gotta *ease* you into decent fashion.”

“A hoodie is decent fashion,” Dream grumbled. He rubbed the fabric between his fingers. “I have to ask, though. . . why black?”

“‘Cause black looks cool,” Tommy deadpanned. “White gets dirty too easily, gray is too similar to your ghost outfit, blue and yellow definitely wouldn’t look good on you, you *know* why I didn’t use orange, purple is Purpled’s brand, red reminds me of loop 90, and you tried to murder me the last time I dyed your hoodie pink.”

“Fair,” Dream admitted. He had shimmied the hoodie over his head and was now tugging the hem down. “How do I look?”

“Like an idiot,” Tommy informed him. “Who the fuck wears a hoodie over a hoodie?”

“It’s cold!”

“So?! I’m wearing a t-shirt, you don’t see me keeling over and dying of hypothermia, do you?!”

“You have a *fur cape!*”

“And I look awesome in it. Your point?”

Dream rolled his eyes and huffed, looking back down at the hoodie. His exasperated expression melted into something slightly warmer. “. . . thanks, Tommy.” He paused for a moment, then reached into his inventory. “Merry Christmas.”

“Are you fucking serious,” Tommy deadpanned as he took Cat from Dream. He ran his fingers over the smooth surface of the disc. “Did you-- did you steal this from Bad and Skeppy?”

“. . . I plead the fifth.”

“Americans,” Tommy grumbled. He flipped the disc over in his hands. “. . . Wow, I haven’t seen this in forever. Gotta complete the set now-- do you think I could slip Mellohi from Tubbo without him noticing?”

“No idea. Let’s find out.”

82. *toddler tales, pt. 6* ([see previous parts of this loop here](#))

“I have two more invis pots, I’ll be fine--”

“Invis pots last for eight minutes,” Philza snapped. His wings flared out with agitation. “*Don’t*. You’ll get yourself killed.”

“They’re *out there*, Phil-- I can’t just--”

A knock on the door interrupted their argument. Both men froze, heads snapping around to the entrance.

“Hide,” Philza breathed. Technoblade obeyed instantly, disappearing into the adjacent bedroom. Philza heard the closet doors creak. Taking a deep, steadying, breath, he turned to the door.

“Who’s there?” he called.

“Tubbo,” the person on the other side answered. Philza’s heart sank.

*Tubbo*. Why was he here? Had he discovered Technoblade’s presence? Had he found out about Tommy and Dream?

Setting his shoulders, Philza rearranged his face into an expression of cold annoyance and opened the door. “Mister President,” he greeted, careful to keep his gaze on Tubbo’s face even as he scanned his surroundings in his peripheral vision. It appeared that Tubbo was alone this time - no butcher army in sight. Which probably meant he wasn’t here for Technoblade.

That left two options: either he was here for Philza, or he was here because of the kids. Neither were reassuring.

Tubbo’s expression had flattened slightly at Philza’s subtle hostility. “Philza Minecraft,” he said. “Can I come in?”

Philza smiled, sharp and unfriendly. “Do I have a choice? Or are you just going to barge in like you did last time?”

“Yeah, you get to decide.”

“Then no.”

Tubbo tilted his head. “Alright then, I’ll make it quick. Do you happen to know how Dream and Tommy got turned into kids?”

Shit. Shit, shit, *shit*. Only years of practice allowed Philza to keep his posture relaxed. He shoved down his rising alarm and instead furrowed his brows, pasting an incredulous expression on his face. “. . . What?”

Tubbo scrutinized him. Philza forced his bristling feathers to lay flat. “What?” he repeated. “They-- Dream and Tommy got turned into kids?”

Tubbo hummed. “Quackity and I ran into them,” he said casually. Philza couldn’t keep his next breath from catching in his throat. “Wonder how two toddlers managed to get through the Nether and into L’Manberg.”

“Wait, wait, back up--” Philza grimaced. “Dream and Tommy. They’re-- what the fuck? How?”

Tubbo tilted his head, mouth thinning into a neutral line. “I think you know.”

Philza narrowed his eyes, fighting to keep his panic off his face. “I really don’t.”

“Funny,” Tubbo said mildly. “Dream mentioned a ‘Mister Minecraft’ when we talked to him. Something about a ‘kidnapper’, too.”

Well, shit. “. . . I don’t--”

“Stop lying.” Tubbo straightened, eyes cold. “I care about Tommy--”

“Yeah, you exiled him,” Philza muttered. “Real caring.”

Tubbo faltered, then steeled himself. “I *care* about Tommy, and if this is some ploy to hurt him--”

“Look, mate,” Philza interrupted. “I didn’t turn Tommy or Dream into kids.”

“But you know what happened,” Tubbo said.

Philza considered his options. On one hand, he could deny it - continue the charade. He was already on house arrest; Tubbo probably wouldn’t do worse without Quackity here to boss him around. He’d be breaking out later tonight anyway. On the other hand, he could tell the truth; clear things up and probably gain enough trust to work with Tubbo on the issue.

He chose option one. “I really don’t.”

The corners of Tubbo’s mouth turned down. “Tell me how they got shrunk,” he said at last. “I won’t ask you how you know. Just-- tell me. Please.”

Philza paused. He took a mental step back and looked, really *looked* at Tubbo. The teenager seemed cold, calculating, his stance firm. But his hands were folded behind his back-- hidden, so Philza wouldn’t see that they were shaking. His eyes were just the slightest bit too wide, his face just the slightest bit too pale.

No, Tubbo wasn’t calm at all. He was desperate. Worried. Worried about Tommy’s safety.

Philza let out a slow exhale, allowing his tense wings to relax. “Alright. It was a potion mishap.”

Tubbo blinked. “A. . . potion mishap?”

“Tommy was making a potion,” Philza said shortly. “Dream surprised him and he threw the half-finished bottle at him. Got himself caught in the effect.”

“So it wasn’t because someone was trying to kill him,” Tubbo said.

Philza shook his head. “As far as I know, no.”

Tubbo nodded. For a single moment, he relaxed, slumping ever-so-slightly forward, letting his presidential façade crumble. Philza was reminded, suddenly, that Tubbo was still a teenager. A teenager who carried the weight of a nation, and then some, on his shoulders.

But just as quickly as it had fallen, the façade returned. Tubbo drew his shoulders back and then Philza was once again looking at the Third President of L’Manberg.

“Thank you,” was all he said. Without another word, he turned and left. Philza stood watching in the doorway until he disappeared from view, then retreated back into his house. Shutting the door, he closed his eyes and rested his forehead on the smooth wood.

The bedroom door creaked open behind him. “Phil? You good?”

“. . . I don’t know, mate. I don’t know.”

### **83.** *(credit to curry\_powder)*

“Welcome to The Clinc!”

“The-- the clink?” Ranboo asked.

“The *Clinc*,” Tommy snapped. “Look at the sign, boob boy.”

Ranboo looked at the sign pasted at the top of the large wooden stall Dream and Tommy were situated behind. “. . . is that supposed to be French or something?”

“No, it’s clinic without the second i,” Dream informed him. “We removed it because it was unnecessary.”

Ranboo nodded slowly. “I see. And, uh, what exactly is The Clinc?”

Tommy scoffed. “A clinic, duh.”

Dream coughed. “Would you like an appointment? We take payment in cobblestone.”

Ranboo stared at them, then glanced at his inventory. He just happened to have a stack of cobblestone. “Uh. . . how much for one appointment?”

“Ten blocks.” Dream grimaced. “We forgot to put that on the sign. So you want an appointment?”

Ranboo sighed and dropped ten blocks of cobblestone on the counter. “Sure, why not?”

“I’ll take ‘im,” Tommy declared, pushing himself to his feet and swiping the blocks into his counter. “One appointment with Doctor Innit, comin’ right up!”

---

“You’re too tall,” Tommy declared. “My tallness is threatened.”

Ranboo winced. “I, uh, I can’t really do anything about that.”

“I can,” Tommy assured him. “We have surgery for that.”

“S. . . surgery?”

“Surgery,” Tommy confirmed. He pulled out a clipboard with a diagram of a stick figure and presented it to Ranboo. “See, we’ll just cut right across here. Easy-peasy. You’ll be shorter in no time.”

Ranboo smiled nervously. “Uh. . . I don’t think. . .”

“If you’re worried about the cost, it’s completely free,” Tommy assured him. “And you’ll also be free of your chronic tallness.”

“I-I’m good. Thanks.”

Tommy snorted and shoved his clipboard back into his inventory, trading it for an axe. “Bold of you to assume you have a choice, bitch.”

Ranboo, predictably, ran for his life.

---

“You’re bald.”

Jack stared blankly at Dream. “. . . I know.”

“You’re *bald*,” Dream repeated. “*Bald*.”

“Yeah, so?”

“It makes you too powerful,” Dream said gravely. He pulled an eye-searing neon rainbow wig from beneath the counter and held it out to Jack. “You must wear this to counteract your powerfulness.”

“What the fuck? No!”

---

“You’re in denial,” Tommy said.

Fundy blinked. “I-- I am?”

Tommy nodded sagely “Uh-huh. You’re denying your true self.”

Fundy’s eyes narrowed. “. . . is this because you think I’m a furry?”

“I don’t *think* you’re a furry, I *know* you’re a furry.”

“I’m not a furry!”

Tommy patted his shoulder. “See? There’s the denial.”

“I’m *not*,” Fundy stressed. “I have a *human* face--”

“But you’re a furry at heart.”

Fundy took a deep breath, ears flattening against his head. “I. Am. Not. A. Furry,” he gritted out.

“You gotta learn to accept yourself, Fundy. Self-denial isn’t healthy.”

Fundy let out an enraged scream and tackled him.

---

“I diagnose you with potato obsession.”

“. . . Heh?” Technoblade deadpanned. “Excuse me?”

“You heard me. Potatoes are disgusting and your love for them is blasphemy of all that is good and holy.”

Technoblade narrowed his eyes. “See, there’s a problem with your argument-- potatoes are amazin’, and your opinion is obviously biased.”

“Like yours isn’t?” Dream shot back.

“Touché. My point still stands. What exactly do you find disgustin’ about potatoes?”



Dream scowled. “Oh, I don’t know-- the starchy texture, maybe, and also the fact that they either taste like dirt or nothing at all?”

“First of all,” Technoblade said, “You obviously have never had french fries or potato chips. Second of all, potatoes are *delicious*. Your taste just isn’t refined enough to appreciate the complexity of their flavor.”

Dream crossed his arms. “Eat raw potatoes every day for a year straight, then look me in the eye and tell me they taste good.”

“I did, actually.”

A pause. Dream stared at him. “I-- what? When?”

Technoblade stared at him, dead-eyed. “I had no time to cook during the great potato war, Dream.”

Dream stared at him. “So-- so you just. Ate the potatoes.”

“I ate the potatoes,” Technoblade confirmed.

". . . and you still like them."

"Yep."

"There is something *wrong* with you."

"Dream, I have literal voices in my head. If liking potatoes is your standard for wrongness, then we need to have a serious discussion."

---

“You’re old.”

“Nothing we can do about that, mate.”

“You’re ancient.”

“If you say so.”

“What if you fall and can’t get back up?”

“I regularly spar with Technoblade. I’ll be okay.”

“You could keel over and die at any moment.”

“Tommy, I’m physically 33.”

“You’re *prehistoric*.”

Philza Minecraft sighed. “I’m not old, you’re just a child.”

“I am nOT A CHILD, YOU PRICK--”

---

“Eyyyyy man! How you doin’, man?”

“Nope nope nope nope *nope*,” Dream hissed. “No. Go away.”

Mexican Dream pouted. “Can I get an appointment?”

“We reserve the right to refuse customers.”

“Should’ve put that on the sign, man.”

“It is on the sign. It’s just written in invisible ink.”

Mexican Dream eyed the sign dubiously. “If you say so.”

“Dream, you will not believe what Philza Minecraft just d-- wait, is that MD?!”

Mexican Dream beamed. “Tommy! Eyyy man, how you doin’?”

Tommy grinned. “Absolutely fuckin’ epic! You want an appointment?”

“Sure, man!”

“Tommy,” Dream groaned. Tommy flipped him off.

---

“I diagnose you with tiny.”

There was a moment of silence. Slowly, Tubbo met Tommy’s gaze. Then he smiled, sweet and absolutely fucking terrifying.

“You have three seconds to run.”

“Fair,” Tommy admitted before he bolted.

**84.** (*credit to Smallest*)

Wilbur ran a hand over the wall of the passage. “Tommy, when did you find the time to do this?”

“Snuck out when you were sleeping,” Tommy lied. Dream had actually been the one to remake the Final Control Room, since he currently had a lot more free time than Tommy. He’d taken the liberty of using an excessive amount of cobblestone (at Tommy’s request), and also dusted the floor with glitter (because why not). “Anyways, I’ve been messin’ with some redstone, boys, and I have some *epic* weapons for you.”

Fundy stopped in his tracks. “Wait, is this why you asked me about TNT launchers last week?”

“TNT--” Wilbur turned to Tommy. “Tommy, this is a *prank* war.”

“I know,” Tommy scoffed. “What, you think I’d actually fill the launchers with TNT?”

A pause. “Wait, so there actually are launchers down there?”

“See for yourself, big man.”

The revolutionaries exchanged glances before following him.

The narrow corridor soon opened into a dimly-lit room, lined with chests. A couple of wheeled, canon-like objects were pushed up against the far wall. Fundy stared at them.

“Are *those* the TNT launchers?” he asked incredulously. “You-- how did you downsize them?”

“I’m just that good,” Tommy said smugly. Fundy huffed and rolled his eyes.

The creaking of hinges rang through the room as Wilbur opened one of the chests. “Tommy, there’s. . . nothing in these chests.”

Eret frowned. “There isn’t?” He, too, moved over to another chest and pulled it open. “. . . Yeah, it’s. . . empty.”

Tubbo turned to look at him from his own chest. “Tommy?”

“. . . Huh, interesting,” Tommy said flatly. He slid his hands into his pockets and casually took a step back. A loud click echoed through the room as his heel made contact with the button hidden in the floor. “Wonder how that happened.”

Tubbo’s brows furrowed. “Tommy, what--” The rest of his words were drowned out by the grating of cobblestone against cobblestone. A section of the wall slid up, revealing the Dream Team. Before the shocked L’Manbergians could react, they were on them, pelting them with water balloons. Eret went down as a balloon caught him in the face.

“ERET!” Fundy shrieked. “ERET, NO!”

Sapnap turned and lunged at him, and Fundy was forced to retreat. Tommy watched, grinning, as the four remaining revolutionaries were driven towards the corridor. “Take the L, boys,” he called. “This was really fuckin’ stupid!”

Dream fumbled with the water balloon he had been about to throw at Wilbur’s fleeing form, head snapping around. “The *fuck*-- ”

Tommy snorted. “You really thought I was gonna steal Eret’s line? I got originality, Dream, unlike *some* people.”

In the distance, a water-drenched Wilbur sneezed. Loudly.

#### 85. remix, pt. 4 ([see previous parts of this loop here](#))

“Dream.”

“Hi, Technoblade.”

“Do you remember what I told you when you woke up?”

“Yeah.”

“And what was it?”

“To stay indoors because I almost froze to death.”

“And where are you?”

“Outdoors.”

“So why, after I *specifically* told you *not* to go outside, did you go outside?”

“... It’s snowing. I don’t get to see snow a lot.”

Technoblade huffed. “If you want to see snow, look at it through the window. Now get inside before you freeze again.”

“Aye aye,” Dream muttered, letting Technoblade usher him back into the house. He shook the snow off his boots and unclasped his fur cape, tossing it onto the hook by the door.

Technoblade moved straight for one of the potion stands, leaning over and tapping the glass bottles with one long, pointy nail. “All good,” he grunted, then straightened and jabbed a finger at the kitchen. “Go eat.”

“I’m not hungry.”

Technoblade leveled him with a flat stare. Dream raised his hands. “I’m going, I’m going.”

“And eat your carrots this time,” Technoblade called after him. “You need the nutrients.”

---

“The Butcher Army,” Ranboo said, eyeing the posters plastered all over the walls. “Bit. . . on the nose, don’t you think?”

“Ranboo,” Quackity deadpanned. “We literally have a list of people we’re going to kill. We can’t have some cutesy nickname.”

Ranboo flushed, tail waving nervously. “That’s not what I meant! I was-- I just thought it was kinda. . . aggressive.”

Quackity rolled his eyes and waved him off with a hand, then spun the hit list around the table and stuck his finger on the name at the top. “Anyways. Technoblade’s our first target. Are we all on the same page here?”

“Kinda hard not to be,” Ranboo muttered. Quackity snorted, then snapped the hit list shut. Without warning he pulled a diamond axe from his inventory and slammed it on the table. The other three jumped.

“The plan is simple.” Quackity looked around the room, meeting their eyes with a steady gaze. “We find and we kill Technoblade. We bring him to justice.” He paused. “. . . The only issue we have right now is how the fuck we’re gonna find him.”

Fundy managed to pass his snicker off as a very unconvincing cough. “Any-- *ahem*-- any ideas?”

“I think. . . Philza,” Tubbo said. “He’s been-- he’s good friends with Technoblade, isn’t he?”

Quackity’s eyes narrowed. “You’re telling me,” he said slowly, “That *Philza Minecraft*, a citizen of L’Manberg. . . has been conspiring with Technoblade.”

Tubbo shifted. “I mean. . . I’ve seen him sending out books and things. With his crows. Dunno who else he’d be sending ‘em to.”

Quackity stared at him for a tense moment. Without warning he spun on his heel and stalked towards the hidden door. “I’m going to knock his door down,” he seethed.

“Wait, wait, wait!” Tubbo slid in front of him, slightly panicked. “Wait, Big Q! If we just barge in there, we’ll freak him out!”

“What the hell has he been doing with *Technoblade*?!” Quackity demanded. He tried to step around Tubbo, but Tubbo threw his arms out.

“Wait,” he repeated. “If we go in there calm and collected, he’ll be more likely to cooperate with us.”

Quackity stared at him for a long moment, then exhaled sharply and lowered his axe. “Fine. We’ll talk to him. *Peacefully.*”

Tubbo slowly stepped aside, watching as Quackity turned back to the others. “Is everyone ready? Got your gear?”

“I, uh, don’t have an axe,” Ranboo said. Fundy handed him his own without a word. “Thanks.”

Quackity surveyed the room one final time, then nodded sharply and jerked his head towards the door. “Let’s move out.”

## Chapter End Notes

\*squints at decreasing wordcount\* this better not be a trend

Also new inspired fic!! It’s rlly well-written had me cackling for a minute straight so go read it :D

### **Loop Notes**

**81.** An astonishing number of people failed to recognize Dream when he changed his outfit. Tommy laughed at his misery.

**83.** Even after many, many loops, Tubbo remains absolutely terrifying.

# Chapter 18

## Chapter Notes

So uh. Lore happened, huh. Lemme just-- \*slaps canon divergence tag on the fic like flex tape\*

This is fine. Everything is totally fine. It's gonna be okay.

sorry this took so long, it's been a busy couple of weeks. Updates might be a bit slow until the holiday season is over

### **Spotlighted Comments**

**curry\_powder:** Not even tommy can go near It Was Never Meant To Be™ for the fear of the divine powers of COPYRIGHT

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

### **86. (*credit to hyacinthus*)**

“What the fuck happened to your mask?”

Dream blinked. “. . . My mask?”

“The smile!”

“What about it?”

Sapnap's face went through a series of interesting expressions. At last he sighed, shoulders slumping in defeat. “It’s. . . an uwu.”

Dream paused, then wrinkled his nose. “Did you really say that out loud?”

“I didn’t have a choice!”

“You could have just said that the smile changed!”

“*I said that!* You--” Sapnap paused, suspicion twisting his features. He stared at Dream for a moment, then jabbed a finger at him. “You made me say it on purpose,” he accused.

Dream grinned.

“You did!” Sapnap hissed. “Fuck you. Fuck this. I’m gonna go join L’Manberg. Fuck your dictatorship. Viva la revolution all the way!”

Dream burst into laughter, doubling over. “Sorry,” he wheezed between cackles. “Couldn’t-- miss-- the chance-- to mess with you.”

“Fuck you,” Sapnap grumbled again.

---

“Why.”

Dream blinked. “Why what?”

Punz gestured at his face. “You. Just. Why?”

“Well,” Dream started slowly, “I’m not quite sure why Prime decided to let me live another day--”

“No, the *mask*,” Punz huffed. “Why the hell is it-- different?”

There was a pause. “. . . but it’s not?”

Punz leveled him with a flat stare.

“It’s not!” Dream insisted.

“What’s not?” George asked through a mouthful of bread. He promptly dropped said bread when he caught sight of Dream. “What happened to your mask?!”

“Nothing happened to it!” Dream cried.

“Bullshit,” Punz deadpanned.

Sapnap poked his head into the room. “What’s going on? I heard shouting.”

“Dream’s mask is, uh.” George fumbled for the right words. “Different.”

“It’s the same as it’s always been!” Dream protested. Sapnap stared at him for a long moment, then shrugged and turned to Punz and George.

“I don’t see anything wrong with it,” he said. And *dang*, his poker face was *good*. Dream mentally applauded his acting skills.

“You don’t--” George cut himself off, lifting his goggles to rub his eyes. “You know what? I’m not even going to bother.”

“We are literally about to go to war in two hours,” Punz muttered.

“Yeah, so?”

Punz buried his face in his hands and let out a long, *long* sigh.



---

“Is nobody gonna talk about Dream’s mask?” Fundy blurted.

“No,” Punz and Wilbur said in unison. Then they simultaneously recoiled and glared at each other.

“We don’t talk about Dream’s mask,” George added blandly. “It’s just. . . best not to question it.”

“What’s wrong with Dream’s mask?” Tommy asked. The others turned to stare at him and he shrugged. “I mean. . . it’s the same as it’s always been, innit?”

Sapnap pointed triumphantly at Tommy, turning to Punz and George. “Exactly! See, that’s what I’ve been telling you!”

George let out a tired sigh as Punz turned his gaze heavenward. “Fuck,” the mercenary groaned. “There’s another one.”

“*Anyways*,” Wilbur coughed.

“Wait, no we can’t just ignore--”

“For the sake of my sanity, we can and we *will*,” Wilbur interrupted, glaring at Fundy. The fox hybrid shut his mouth. “Now where were we? Ah yes-- give us independence, or give us death. We’d rather die than join your SMP.”

The dramatic tension lasted for all of three seconds before Tommy broke down cackling.

---

Dream stared at Tommy. Tommy grinned at Dream. Dream raised an eyebrow.

“. . . A little warning would have been nice.”

Tommy’s grin widened. Dream sighed.

“Okay, I’ll bite. How?”

“Snuck in while you were sleeping, hit you with a hax weakness potion so you wouldn’t wake up, stole your mask, repainted it, and slapped it back on.”

“Uh-huh.” Dream nodded. “Y’know, one of these days, I’m going to dye your hair green.”

Tommy snorted. “‘S not my fault you don’t look in mirrors.”

“Lime green.”

“Speakin’ of, why *don’t* you look in mirrors?” Tommy mused aloud. “Is it ‘cause you’re ugly?”

“Lime green with *sparkles*. ”

**87.**

“Hey Sam Nook, can you curse?”

Sam Nook tilted his head. *AWESAMDUDE HAS PROGRAMMED ME TO AVOID PROFANITY.*

“That’s fuckin’ stupid,” Tommy muttered. “I curse all the time.”

The android hesitated. *IT ISN’T GOOD TO CURSE IN FRONT OF CHILDREN.*

“Okay, first of all, I’m not a fucking child. Second of all-- you’re literally two months old.”

*YOU HAVE A POINT*, Nook acknowledged. *BUT I STILL PREFER NOT TO CURSE.*

“. . . Hear me out,” Tommy said. “Come visit the prison with me, and address everyone as ‘bitch’. Except me, of course. Call me the biggest man or some shit.”

*WHY?*

“Because it’s funny.”

*I FAIL TO SEE HOW THIS IS AMUSING*, Nook admitted. Tommy huffed.

“It’s funny to *me*,” he amended. “C’mon Nook, please? For me?”

Nook remained unmoved. Tommy switched tactics.

“We’ve made a ton of progress this week,” he wheedled. “The hotel can wait for a day. Don’t you want a break from building?”

*I AM AN ANDROID*, Sam Nook deadpanned. *I DO NOT REQUIRE REST.*

“I need a break,” Tommy amended. “C’mon big man, just once?”

Nook hesitated.

“Please?”

*WILL IT MAKE YOU HAPPY?*

Tommy nodded vigorously. “Oh yeah. Definitely.”

Nook inclined his head. *VERY WELL. I WILL DO AS YOU SAY.*

---

“SAM! I’M HERE TO VISIT DREAM!”

Tommy waited impatiently as the portal hummed to life. The warden stepped out, geared up in full netherite and wielding a trident. “Tommy,” he greeted. “. . . Sam Nook.”

*HELLO, BITCH.*

Sam froze. Blinked. Processed the words, then processed them again. He slowly pressed a hand to his face. “. . . What did you do to Nook?”

*I HAVE BEEN INSTRUCTED TO ADDRESS ALL INDIVIDUALS OTHER THAN THE BIGGEST MAN AS ‘BITCH’.*

The warden appeared to be in physical pain. “Yeah, okay,” he said. “Okay. And, uh. You said you were here to visit?”

“Yup,” Tommy chirped. He gestured at Nook. “Got my emotional support android. He can punt Dream if he tries anything funny.”

“Okay,” Sam repeated. “I, uh, I guess letting both of you into the cell will be fine?”

*DO NOT WORRY, BITCH, Nook said seriously. WE WILL BE VERY RESPONSIBLE. IF THE OTHER BITCH TRIES ANYTHING, I WILL PROTECT THE BIGGEST MAN.*

Sam looked torn between laughing and crying. In the end, he just stepped aside and wordlessly gestured towards the portal. Tommy made a mental note to test if confusing Sam was an effective way to break into the prison.

---

“Tommy,” Dream said. “I see you’ve brought a friend.”

Sam Nook inclined his head. *HELLO, BITCH.*

Dream made an absolutely *flabbergasted* expression. Tommy collapsed against Sam Nook, cackling his heart out. The android reached out to steady him, and despite his inability to emote, his exasperation was obvious.

*PLEASE CALM YOURSELF BEFORE YOU SUFFOCATE.*

Tommy just laughed harder. Dream stared at the two of them in bewilderment. “Er. . . hello, Sam Nook.”

The android tilted his head. *YOU KNOW ME?*

“Vaguely,” Dream hedged. “Why are you here?”

Nook glanced at Tommy, who had downgraded from full-body laughter to constant giggling. *I AM HERE TO PUNT YOU IF YOU TRY ANYTHING.*

Tommy catapulted straight back into wheezing. Dream dragged a hand down his face.

“I regret all my life choices,” he informed the two visitors.

The remaining air in Tommy’s lungs whooshed out of him with a squeak. He melted into the floor, practically draping himself over Sam Nook’s netherite boots. The android let out a staticky sigh and hauled him up by the back of his shirt.

*BREATHE*, he ordered. Tommy took in a stuttering inhale, only to collapse right back into giggling. Dream sighed.

It was going to be a long day.

## **88.** *(credit to Smallest and Gabbygirl317)*

“You’re cornered!” Dream yelled at the rebels, sword drawn and pointed straight at Wilbur’s heart. “Surrender or face the consequences!”

“Prime, do you ever shut up?” Tommy stomped forward, ignoring his comrades’ shouts and Tubbo’s desperate attempt to stop him. “We’re not surrendering to you!”

Dream smirked. “You can’t defeat me.”

Tommy’s face went deadly serious. “Trust me, I can.”

Someone behind Dream snickered. Dream didn’t look back, instead lowering his sword in a show of arrogance. “Go ahead, then. Defeat me.”

Wilbur reached out to pull Tommy back. “Tommy--”

“You underestimate me,” Tommy cackled, shaking Wilbur off. He reached into his inventory and pulled out an ink-black potion. “This isn’t even my final form!”

Dream’s eyes widened and he lunged forward. “STOP HIM!” he shouted. His allies took a moment to react, but by then it was already too late. Tommy downed the potion in two gulps and dropped the empty bottle into the grass, where it promptly shattered to pieces.

Dream skidded to a stop and threw out a hand, stopping the others in their tracks. They watched warily as Tommy hunched over, his breathing erratic.

“Tommy?” Tubbo hesitated, torn between reaching for his friend and backing away. “What. . . what did you do?”

Slowly, the teenager looked up. A sharp grin spread across his face and when he blinked, his irises flared purple. Before their eyes, he appeared to grow, skin melting into midnight-black scales. The nonloopers gaped up at him, his allies and enemies alike frozen with fear.

With a mighty roar, the creature that had been TommyInnit raised his head. His wings spread wide in challenge, blocking out the sun.

“Dream?” Sapnap tightened his grip on his sword. His voice shook. “What-- what was that potion? What the *hell* do we do?”

“Ender dragon transformation,” Dream said shortly. “. . . don’t worry, I have a plan.”

Without warning he pulled another potion from his inventory, this one the murky brown color of mud. Sapnap let out yelp as he downed it, backpedaling for fear of getting squashed.

There was no need to. Because contrary to expectations, Dream did not turn into a giant dragon. Instead his skin melted away into velvety fur, patched brown and beige.

“What,” Wilbur said, summarizing the entire situation.

“Oh fuck,” Tommy boomed. He jerked, surprised at the volume of his own voice, then scowled. “You really turned into a cow?”

The cow blinked innocently up at him. Tommy jabbed a claw at him. “Don’t give me that look, I know what you’re doing, you bastard--”

Dream sat down and proceeded to look sad. Tommy stared at him.

“Tommy,” Wilbur called. “I-- what are you doing?”

“I can’t hurt cows,” Tommy grumbled, still glaring at Dream like he was an insult to his existence. “And this *fucker* knows that.”

“I mean. . .” Tubbo glanced between Tommy and the Dream SMP fighters. “The others aren’t cows, are they?”

Tommy’s gaze shifted to the human fighters. A grin spread over his face, revealing rows of sharp teeth. “Tubbo, big T, my favorite man. You make an *excellent* point.”

Dream made a noise of protest. Tommy rolled his eyes, picked him up, and deposited him on the roof of the Camarvan. Dream shrieked and scrambled to the edge, only to pause when he realized how far the drop was. He still wasn’t very used to being in cow form - if he tried to jump down, he’d break his legs. He sent Tommy a baleful glare.

“Don’t gimme that look,” the dragon deadpanned. “You brought this on yourself.”

The glare intensified. Tommy snorted and turned away, violet particles streaming between his fangs.

“Right, where were we?” He squinted at the three remaining Dream SMP fighters, then snapped his wings open. “Oh right! *Run.*”

89.

*“It’s a battle of wills. It’s a battle of fire. It’s a battle of strength and your heart’s desire.”*

“So you got Wilbur back into songwriting, huh?”

“Mhm.” Tommy swung his feet over the ledge, head tilted. Wilbur’s voice echoed off the walls of Pogtopia, accompanied with some. . . slightly aggressive guitar strumming. “I kept leaving the guitar in random places for him to find. He eventually cracked and picked it up again. Hasn’t put it down since.”

*“Get ready for the fight. Pick up your sword. This is ours, this is ours!”*

Dream hummed. “Any reason why his songs are more. . . motivational than usual?”

“He’s hyped up for the Manberg war,” Tommy deadpanned. “I guess he’s just channeling his bloodthirst into music.”

*“Ready, aim, fire! Take the shot! Make one last jab - kick it up, kick it up a notch!”*

“I . . . see.”

Tommy shrugged. “He hasn’t gone as insane this time ‘round, so I think getting him back into songwriting was a pretty good idea. Has he approached you about the TNT?”

“No. Not yet, at least.”

*“This is our fight. This is our war. Our chance to reclaim what’s ours. This is our L’Manberg!”*

“*Our* L’Manberg?” Dream repeated, raising an eyebrow. “What happened to *my* L’Manberg?”

“My working theory is that the songwriting kept him centered, which means no paranoia and ‘my unfinished symphony’ bullshit. He’s a bit less cynical now, so I guess he *finally* realizes that he’s got allies.”

*“This is our L’Manberg!”*

“Or he’s considering Communism.”

“I--” Tommy paused. “. . . Oh shit. With the whole election fiasco, you might be right.”

Dream let out a wheezing laugh. There was a crash and unharmonious clash of guitar strings as Wilbur broke off mid-verse, followed by the sound of hurried footsteps. Both loopers froze, exchanging glances.

“Aaand that’s my cue to leave,” Dream muttered. “Nice talking to you. I’ll try to get Tubbo out of Manberg tonight, so be on the lookout for that.”

“Got it. Now fuck off before Wilbur catches you.”

**90.**

His ears were ringing. He could smell smoke. Sticks and stones dug into his back.

“Tommy,” Dream said.

Tommy kept his eyes closed. Maybe if he played dead, Dream would leave him alone.

No such luck. “Tommy,” Dream repeated, sounding slightly impatient. “Stop avoiding me.”

Tommy opened his eyes to glare up at him. “Fuck you.” He promptly rolled over and shut his eyes.

There was a low sigh. “We have to work together if we want a way out,” Dream said.

“Fuck you,” Tommy repeated.

“You can’t ignore me forever.”

“I’ve done it pretty well for the last ten loops.”

Another sigh. Dream sure sighed a lot. Tommy hoped he exhaled his lungs. “Tommy. . .”

Tommy opened his eyes again to glare at the landscape. From where he was laying he could see the edge of the ocean, where the waves lapped at the sand. “I’m not working with you.”

“I know we’ve had our differences,” Dream said. Tommy rolled his eyes. “But if we want to get out of this, we have to set them aside.”

“Prime, could you get any more cliché?” Tommy pushed himself into a sitting position. “You really think I’m just gonna forget everything you did?”

“No, I don’t,” Dream snapped. “But you’re the only other person in this loop. If we work together, we can get out of this quicker. I’m willing to ignore our past conflicts--”

“Oh, *you’re* willing to ignore it?” Tommy rose to his feet, ignoring the burning in his legs. “Remind me who the *wrongen* is here?”

Dream sneered. “Don’t act like you’re innocent--”

“And don’t act like you are either,” Tommy shot back. “You’re a fucking control freak with a god complex and literally nothing to show for it. You blew up my nation, you took all *three* of my canon lives, you a-abused me in exile-- you’re the reason everyone on this fucking server is miserable! You think I’m just gonna forget that?!”

“You came on the server, and the first thing you did was threaten to break the rules!” Dream shouted. “I just wanted a safe world where everyone could get along! Then you and Wilbur decided-- decided to just go off and make a nation-- on *my* server-- without even asking me!”

“We did ask you! You chose violence!”

“You didn’t ask-- you *told* me *after* you built the place! I didn’t want to fight, but you forced me to! Everything was fine, and then you and Wilbur decided to fuck it up because you were *bored!*”

“We just wanted somewhere to be free!”

“You *were* free!”

“Not with your fucking rules hanging over our heads!”

Dream gritted his teeth, his fingernails digging into the palms of his hands. “The *rules* are in place for a *reason*.”

“What, so you can feed your superiority complex?!”

“To keep the server in *one piece!*” Dream thrust a hand in the direction of Logstedshire. “You decided to break them-- now look where we are!”

Tommy was shaking. “Don’t act like you’re the victim,” he hissed. “Don’t you fucking *dare* act like we hurt you.”

“Yeah?” Dream growled. “What do you call the shit that happened in prison then?”

Tommy laughed. It sounded off to his own ears. “If I recall correctly, *you* weren’t the one that got beaten to death.”

An odd glint entered Dream’s eyes. “That’s not what I was talking about,” he said. Like he was brushing it off. Like he just expected Tommy to brush off *his own fucking death*.

Static filled Tommy’s ears. He felt light, far away. His ribcage tightened, lungs constricting.

“Fuck you,” he breathed. His eyes were burning. “Fuck-- fuck you.”

Dream tilted his head, watching him like he was an interesting specimen.

Tommy *snapped*.



“FUCK YOU!” he screamed, lunging forward and punching Dream straight across the face. The man staggered back, raising his arms to fend off the blows Tommy rained down upon him. “FUCK YOU, YOU *BASTARD!*”

“Tommy-- wait--”

Tommy did not wait. He tackled Dream and slammed him to the ground, wedging an arm under his chin. “I was *HEALING!*” he howled. His voice sounded more animal than human. “I WAS HEALING, AND THEN YOU-- YOU BEAT ME TO DEATH FOR YOUR OWN SICK SATISFACTION! You killed me so you could-- so you could prove a *point!* You took my THIRD CANON LIFE to PROVE A *FUCKING POINT!*”

He punched Dream again. Cracks spiderwebbed across the surface of the mask, but its blank smile remained firmly in place. The teenager leaned closer until their faces were inches apart.

“You don’t know what death feels like,” he snarled. “You don’t know what *Limbo* feels like. The fucking-- *emptiness*, the *pain*-- and you-- you left me in there for *two fucking days*. *Just so you could prove a point*. And *then*, just when I woke up in the past and-- and I thought things would get better, that maybe I had a second chance at life-- I find out I’m in a *fucking TIME LOOP* with *YOU!*”

His own words rang in his ears. Tommy glared, panting, down at Dream. The man remained silent, his expression hidden behind a layer of porcelain. Tommy imagined his face. Imagined the sick grin he had when he first revived Tommy.

His bloody knuckles collided with the mask. Dream’s head jerked, but he made no attempt to fight back.

“Fuck you,” Tommy spat again. He wanted to kill Dream. Murder him with his bare hands. But then he’d wake up in the next loop, and Dream would be alive again. It was pointless.

And fuck, Tommy was *tired*.

All at once, the inferno in his chest went out. He slumped forward, prying his fingers one by one from the death grip he had on the front of Dream’s hoodie. Slowly, lethargically, he pushed himself up and stumbled a few feet away. The other man remained silent, spread out on his back in the sand.

“. . . Don’t follow me,” Tommy bit out.

He turned and staggered off in the general direction of the Arctic, Dream’s gaze burning into the back of his head.

Dream POV of the early loops coming up soon

The song Wilbur's singing is actually a song called [Our L'Manberg: Manberg vs Pogtopia War](#) by trashyinferno. Epic song. Personal favorite part is when the voices start layering (whatever it's called aashdhfsf) at the end

anyways LOOKIT THIS AMAZING [FANART](#) WHOOO

ALSO NEW INSPIRED FIC!! Lots of discduo friendship, so if you like that then check it out :D

### **Loop Notes**

**86.** Wilbur's strategy: ignore it if it doesn't make sense. Fundy's strategy: question it if it doesn't make sense. Sapnap's strategy: if you can't beat 'em, join 'em.

**87.** We believe in Sam Nook supremacy.

**90.** Funny how everyone always wants to find one person to blame.

# Chapter 19

## Chapter Notes

I deleted and rewrote this chapter three times and yet the only part I like is 91  
\*slams chapter down on table\* anyways happy holidays here's a present for you bye

### Spotlighted Comments

**Taran776:** Oh god i can't stop thinking about all the sadist like animatics whith Dream having uwu on his mask

**Content Warning - implied/referenced suicidal ideation in 95.**

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

91.

*“Everything in our universe is either a disc or not a disc.”*

Wilbur bolted upright in his bed, head snapping around. “Tommy?” he called.

*“No one ever specified that Humpty Dumpty was an egg.”*

Wilbur paused, then slowly looked down. Tommy lay flat on his floor, the upper half of his body sticking out from under Wilbur’s bed. His spectral form glowed dimly in the darkness.

*“Surgery is just stabbing someone to life,”* he said.

Wilbur stared. “What?”

The ghost stared back, unblinking. *“If you take care of chickens, that makes you a chicken tender.”*

“... Okay,” Wilbur said. “Why are you lying on my floor at four in the morning?”

*“Reading is just looking at a piece of paper and hallucinating.”*

“That doesn’t answer my question.”

*“The best liar you know isn’t the best liar you know.”*

“That’s-- unfortunately true, but what--”

*“The bigger your bed is, the more bed room and less bedroom you have.”*

Wilbur nodded. “Yeah. Sure. Tommy, what the fuck are you doing?”

The ghost paused and tilted his head, face unnervingly blank. *“Anxiety is just our brain sending us fake news.”*

“You’re messing with me, aren’t you.”

*“You are forever trapped inside your skull. Except for me, because I’m dead, but now I’m trapped in my ghostly skull.”*

Wilbur breathed in through his nose, held for five, and exhaled. “I’m going back to sleep.”

*“Sleep is a free trial of death,”* the ghost whispered before he sunk into the floor. Wilbur stared at the spot where he’d been for a long, long time, then laid back down and tried to go back to sleep.

Needless to say, he failed.

**92. remix, pt. 5** ([see previous parts of this loop here](#))

“And *stay inside.*”

“I can fight,” Dream protested as Technoblade pulled open another chest. “You *know* how good I am at PvP--”

“--and you’re still recoverin’ from malnutrition, burns, and a bruised rib,” Technoblade deadpanned. “You’re not fightin’.”

“It’s four versus one! You can’t fight them off by yourself!”

The chest slammed shut. Dream took a step back as Technoblade turned to him, hands full of potions.

“Dream,” he said. “You know you can’t fight off either. You’d be dead weight.”

“I can handle it--”

“I don’t have time for this,” Technoblade muttered, brushing past him. “Dream, I’m serious. Stay inside. *Hide.* If they’re here to kill me, chances are they’ll want to kill you too. I can’t defend both of us.”

Dream hesitated. “But. . .”

“The invis potions are in the chests on the far right, middle row,” Technoblade called. “Grab some and get down to the basement. I’ll call you up when it’s safe.”

The door slammed shut behind him. Dream was left standing alone in the room, gnawing on the inside of his cheek.

They were switching roles, but they were only loosely following each others' scripts. Tommy wouldn't help Technoblade escape. Which meant that if Dream didn't interfere--

He set his shoulders and turned towards the chests. Where did Technoblade keep his weapons again. . .?

---

“TECHNOBLADE! STOP! I HAVE CARL!”

The piglin hybrid whipped around. His fingers curled tighter around his axe when his gaze landed on Quackity, who was sitting astride Carl and holding an axe to the horse's neck.

“You get away from that horse, Quackity,” he snarled.

“Move away from the others,” Quackity snapped back. “Move away, or I'm gonna kill him.”

“Leave the horse out of this!” Quackity shifted the axe an inch closer to Carl's neck and Technoblade instantly complied, eyes wide with panic. “Fine! Okay! Just-- leave Carl alone!”

“And drop your weapons.”

Technoblade hesitated. Dream inhaled, exhaled, and *moved*.

An arrow sprouted from Quackity's hand. The duck hybrid reeled back, howling, the axe tumbling from his spasming fingers and landing in the snow. In that same moment, invisible fingers hooked around the back of his shirt and yanked him off of Carl. Quackity landed on his back in the snow and lashed out with his axe, but Dream had already danced out of range, grabbing hold of Carl's reins and vaulting onto the horse. Carl reared, startled, then dashed off in Technoblade's direction. Dream yanked hard and managed to slow the horse down, just in time to avoid running the piglin hybrid over. Technoblade wasted no time sliding in front of them, sword drawn and wary gaze fixed on the Butcher Army.

“I thought I told you to stay inside,” he hissed.

“You were going to lose,” Dream retorted. “Who's gonna feed me if you die?”

“Who's there?!” Quackity shouted, gaze darting back and forth. He spun in a circle, axe slashing wildly. “Who?!”

Dream gritted his teeth and dismounted from Carl, drawing his own axe. Technoblade's eyes darted to it.

“Where's your armor?” he muttered.

“Don't have any,” Dream muttered back. “Just a lot of invis.”

Fundy's fox ears flicked up. "Dream?!"

Tubbo's head snapped towards him. "*Dream?!?*"

"I--" Fundy's eyes narrowed. "I heard his voice."

Dream hesitated. He probably only had twenty or so seconds left of invisibility - either he could try hitting everyone in the area with a potion and escape in the confusion. . . or he could stay and try talking the Butcher Army down.

"Dream," Tubbo said. "He's the invisible one, isn't he?"

Quackity stilled. "Dream's here?"

Dream's stomach sunk. He took a step back, bumping into Carl. Before his eyes, his hands were reentering the visible spectrum, washed-out and faded like a ghost's.

"Wait, that's--" Fundy stared at him. "Where's his mask?!"

Quackity was smiling, gleeful and full of teeth. "Tubbo," he breathed. "Tubbo, both of them are here. We can--"

Technoblade brandished his sword, knuckles whitening as he tightened his grip. "Leave," he snarled, "Or I'll kill you."

Dream swallowed as adrenaline flooded through his veins. He was fully visible now and completely armor-less. Quackity took a step forward, clearly rearing for a fight, and Dream tensed, sliding into a defensive stance. Fundy followed suit, wary gaze fixed on Technoblade.

Only Tubbo remained still, eyes dark. "Wait," he ordered, pointing his axe at Dream. "Tell me-- what did you do to Tommy?"

Dream went still, his axe dipping. "T. . . Tommy?"

"Yes," Tubbo said. "*Tommy*. What did you do to him?"

"What. . ." Dream shifted, a slow, burning rage flaring in his eyes. "What did *I* do to him? You think-- you think *I* did something to *him*?"

Tubbo's lips thinned. He said nothing.

Dream let out a sardonic laugh that was more akin to a huff. "Well," he ground out, "Sorry to disappoint, but I didn't do anything to him."

Tubbo narrowed his eyes. ". . . Then what happened during exile?"

"You wouldn't believe me even if I--"

"What did he blackmail you with?"

All eyes turned to Fundy, who raised his chin and stood his ground. “Blackmail?” Tubbo asked.

“What did he blackmail you with?” Fundy repeated, his eyes fixed on Dream. “I saw the Enchantment on the picture. He threatened you to get you to exile yourself, didn’t he?”

Dream stared at him. “You--”

“Fundy,” Quackity interrupted, his eyes narrowing. “Fundy, what the hell are you talking about?”

“The-- the picture,” Fundy said. “That Tommy submitted as evidence in court. There was a note on it in Enchantment - ‘*play along, or else*’. What did he say to you?”

Dream took a step back, skin paling to paper-white. “I . . .”

“Hold on,” Technoblade interrupted. “What’s this I’m hearin’ about blackmail?”

Quackity huffed. “Okay, you know what-- shut the fuck up. Dream, Technoblade, surrender or--”

“Wait,” Tubbo said. He lowered his axe, ignoring the noise of protest Quackity made. “You’re saying. . . Tommy blackmailed you into exiling yourself?”

“And he damn well deserved it,” Quackity muttered.

Tubbo took a deep breath. “I went to find Tommy two weeks ago,” he said. “The place you were staying-- it was-- *gone*. Destroyed. Tommy was wearing your mask. He-- he brushed me off, basically abandoned L’Manberg so he could look for you-- he *changed*. What happened during exile, Dream?”

Dream’s mouth opened and closed soundlessly. His gaze darted back and forth. He took another step back, nearly bumping into Technoblade. Tubbo stepped forward, only to freeze when Technoblade raised his sword in warning.

“Personal space,” the piglin hybrid warned. “Back up, Mister *President*.”

“I need to know,” Tubbo protested. “What happened, Dream? Why did Tommy change?”

Dream chewed on the inside of his cheek. “If. . . if I tell you about exile, will you leave us alone?”

Tubbo hesitated. Quackity’s head snapped towards him. “Tubbo,” he said. “You can’t be serious.”

“I . . . I need to know,” Tubbo repeated. His axe disappeared with a flash of light. “Fine. I’ll call off the Butcher Army if you tell me what happened in exile.”

“Tubbo,” Quackity snapped. “Think about this for one damn second--”

“I *am* thinking about this,” Tubbo said. “And I think that at the moment, I’m more worried about Tommy than revenge.”

“It’s not just revenge, it’s L’Manberg!”

“Techno’s in retirement,” Fundy pointed out. “He still has three lives. If we drag him out and kill him, he’d probably just come back and destroy L’Manberg.”

Quackity sneered. “Since when were you all buddy-buddy with Technoblade?”

“I’m not buddy-buddy with Technoblade, I just don’t think killing him is a good idea anymore.” Fundy’s tail lashed nervously, but he met Quackity’s gaze. “Executing Techno and Dream won’t help, Quackity. If anything, it’ll make things *worse*. ”

Technoblade huffed. “That’s what I’ve been tellin’ you all along!”

Quackity gritted his teeth, whirling around to glare at Tubbo. “You’re just gonna give up on revenge?” He demanded. “Just like that? He needs to pay!”

Tubbo let out a tired sigh. “Quackity-- I’m not forgiving Technoblade. This isn’t-- this isn’t me giving up. I just. . . want to focus on the present, not the past. I’m tired of thinking about what-ifs. Something’s wrong with Tommy right here, right now, and-- and I don’t want him to become another what-if.”

Quackity stared at him.

“So no,” Tubbo continued. “I’m not giving up. I’m not forgiving Technoblade. But what happened-- it’s in the past. *Tommy* is still here. And I’m sorry if you disagree, but I think he’s more important.”

There was a moment of tense silence. Slowly, Quackity lowered his axe.

“Fine,” he grumbled. “I’ll hear Dream out, but only because of Tommy.”

Dream cleared his throat. “R-right,” he said. “Um--”

“Dream,” Technoblade cut in, “I’m not gonna stop you if you want to spill your tragic backstory to the guys tryin’ to kill us, but could you not do it on my front lawn?”

“At least I’m not inviting them into your house.”

“Don’t even try that trick with me,” Technoblade deadpanned. “They’re not welcome on my property, that’s nonnegotiable. You can talk somewhere else.”

“It’s fine,” Tubbo said before Quackity could protest. “We can-- would the forest over there work?”

Technoblade hesitated, then inclined his head. “I’m comin’ with you,” he warned.

Dream grimaced. “Techno--”



“No. Followin’ a bunch of people in bloody aprons into the woods is just *askin’* to get killed, Dream.”

“If you come with us, you’ll be doing the same thing--”

“I’m in full netherite, you’re not. I’m goin’ with you. End of story.”

Dream opened his mouth, grasping for an argument and coming up empty. He slumped.

“That’s-- okay. Fine.”

“Now that you’re *done*, ” Quackity drawled, “Can we get going?”

Technoblade fixed him with an unimpressed stare before turning to Tubbo. “Well, Mister President? Lead the way.”

“Don’t call me that,” Tubbo muttered. He turned away and began moving towards the forest.

Quackity, Fundy, Technoblade, and Dream glanced at each other. Technoblade cleared his throat. “Well? Go on ahead.”

Quackity scowled. “I’m not leaving you at my back.”

Dream sighed. “Techno, you can go in front of him. I’ll stay back and stab him if he tries anything.”

“Look, Dream, I appreciate the offer, but knowing that you’re like five seconds away from droppin’ your weapon does not fill me with confidence.”

Dream looked down at his hands. Indeed, they were shaking, fingers spasming unevenly around the axe handle. “Ah,” he muttered. “I might have pushed myself too hard.”

(All it had taken was two months of exile for his body to deteriorate so much. Was this how Tommy felt after--?)

“W-we could just walk in a row?”

All four men startled violently, whipping around. “Where did you come from?!” Technoblade demanded, his axe out and pointed straight at Ranboo. The enderman hybrid yelped and rapidly backpedaled, his tail fluffing out in alarm.

“I’ve been here the entire time!” he cried. “On the sidelines! I swear I didn’t want to be here please don’t kill me--”

“It’s okay,” Dream said tiredly. He pushed Technoblade’s axe down. “He’s not going to hurt us. Good suggestion, by the way-- we can just walk in a row. Nobody has to be behind anyone else.”

“Are you all coming?” Tubbo called from the treeline.

Quackity and Technoblade engaged in an intense staredown. Dream glanced at Fundy and Ranboo.

“Do you want to just go?” he asked.

Fundy snorted and headed off towards Tubbo, Ranboo trailing after him. Dream brought up the rear, leaving Technoblade and Quackity at the back of the group.

Tubbo was waiting for them in a snowy clearing, arms crossed over his bloody apron. “Alright,” he said once they had arranged themselves, both factions split on either side of the clearing. The determined glint in his eyes made something in Dream’s chest ache. “Tell me. What happened during exile?”

Dream took a fortifying breath, reviewing the story he and Tommy had constructed. He’d have to pull some of his own experience from Loop Zero into the lie. *Tommy wanted this*, he reminded himself. *He wanted to be the villain this loop, so don’t hold back.*

With that in mind, he set his shoulders and started talking.

**93.**

“How have they not figured it out yet?!”

Callahan shrugged and took a sip of his drink.

“No, seriously,” Connor snapped, sweeping an arm towards the window, through which the Greater SMP was visible. “It’s *so obvious*, how has no one figured it out?!”

*Most people think they snapped*, Callahan offered, his hands flitting through the air. *All the conflict and chaos finally got to their heads.*

“That’s not--” Connor made a noise of frustration. “To explain *this?!?*”

As if on cue, something exploded in the distance. Both men turned to watch as a plume of rainbow-colored glitter rose in the sky, forming a mushroom cloud.

*You have a point*, Callahan admitted.

“Yes! Thank you! Exactly!”

*Though time loops aren’t the first thing most people think of when their friends--* Callahan paused, considering, then made a gesture towards the glitter cloud hovering over the horizon. *I actually didn’t figure it out until I saw the server logs.*

Connor blinked. “Server logs?”

*Logs marking actions, deaths, the times they occurred, things like that-- they were overloaded. I pulled them up about a week ago, and-- you remember when the glitter war*

*started?*

“4th of January,” Connor deadpanned. “You know how people remember traumatic events really well? Dream and Tommy setting off glitter-rigged TNT launchers all over the server *definitely* counts as a traumatic event.”

*. . . Right, January 4th, Callahan agreed. And the server logs, starting from January 4th, basically became so long that it took me an hour to scroll through one day. It was like someone took a century’s worth of logs and compressed them into a month.*

Connor squinted. “And lemme guess, the logs made no sense?”

*Yes. Callahan’s face twisted into a slight frown. The logs said that Dream died multiple times on January 21st, but. . . he was out and about that day, and he never died once. And then I saw T-O-M-M-Y cackling over the glittering ruins of L’Manberg with Dream. Helped me put things together.*

Connor snorted. “Yeah, well--”

There was another explosion, closer this time. The shack they were sitting in shook dangerously, dust raining from the ceiling. When the tremors subsided, Callahan sighed and pushed away his dust-infused drink.

*We should probably move somewhere safer.*

“Nowhere is safe on this server,” Connor protested. “There isn’t a place they can’t reach.”

*The Church. T-O-M-M-Y is a devout follower of Prime, he’d never touch the Church.*

Another explosion, even closer this time, followed by the sound of two people cackling in unison. Connor went pale, head whipping towards the entrance of the shack.

“Oh no,” he whispered. Callahan rolled his eyes, pulling a splash potion of invisibility from his inventory and smashing it against the floor. Connor yelped as the tingling sensation raced up his arms, flailing until he realized what it was. “A little warning next time!”

Callahan fixed him with a dead-eyed stare, realized he couldn’t see it, and settled for swatting him on the arm instead.

**94.**

The door slammed open. “PHIL!”

Philza took a sip of his coffee. “Hey mate.”

“Phil,” Technoblade repeated, wild-eyed and looking five seconds away from committing murder. His hair was in a mess, his cape and crown were missing, and his hands were stained with splotches of pink. “Someone snuck in and *died my pets pink.*”

Philza took another sip of his coffee. “Oh?”

“*All of them, Phil,*” Technoblade hissed. “*Every. Single. One.*”

“Edward?”

Technoblade threw his hands up his hands. “He’s bleached! And dyed! Without water! I have no idea how!”

“It’s better just to not wonder about these things,” Philza consoled, patting him on the shoulder. “Just let it go, Techno. It’ll be better for your sanity.”

Technoblade turned to him for the first time since he’d barged into Philza’s house, mouth opening to protest-- only to freeze in place. Philza maintained eye contact even as he raised his mug to his face and took another long sip.

“You.” Technoblade said at last.

“Me,” Philza agreed.

“You’re *pink.*”

Philza glanced down at himself. “So I am.”

Technoblade stared at him for a long, long moment. Philza watched with well-hidden amusement as his eyes flitted over Philza’s now-pink hair, his palette-swapped clothes, and his iconic bucket hat. When the silence dragged on, he took a sip of his coffee. “So what do you need?”

Technoblade’s eye twitched. “*Why,*” he ground out.

“You’re gonna have to be more specific.”

“The-- the *pink!* What-- who even did this?!” Technoblade rounded on him. “You know, don’t you?!”

“No,” Philza said. Like a liar.

Technoblade gaped at him. “Phil,” he choked out, his words laced with betrayal. “Why won’t you tell me? *Why would anyone do this?*”

Philza shrugged. “Why would they not?”

“But *why?*!” Technoblade insisted. He looked very tempted to grab Philza by his shoulders and shake him. “Why-- for *what reason--*”

“To match your brand, of course.” At Technoblade’s uncomprehending stare, Philza reached up and tugged at a lock of his pink hair. “Pink,” he said.

“... Pink,” the piglin hybrid repeated numbly.

“Yes, Techno. Pink.”

Technoblade visibly stalled, gaze drifting into a thousand-yard stare even as his brain achieved lightspeed behind his skull. The more clinical part of Philza’s mind noted that this was probably what dying inside looked like. The rest just cackled like a hyena.

He fished his communicator from his inventory and snapped a picture, then flipped to the messages function and sent the pictures to Dream (this *was* the man’s handiwork, after all). Ah, blackmail material. He didn’t have much on Techno, so any and all embarrassing photos were treasured.

When Technoblade had been staring at the wall for a solid minute, Philza decided that it was probably time to snap him out of it. He stepped in front of the piglin hybrid, coffee mug in hand. “Techno? Anyone home?”

Technoblade continued to stare ahead blankly. Philza snapped his fingers in front of his face, and when that failed to garner a reaction, he sighed.

“Look on the bright side,” he consoled. “At least your weapons are untouched.”

“My. . . weapons,” Technoblade parroted. He abruptly whirled around and stalked towards the door. Philza started in surprise, rising to his feet.

“Techno, mate-- what--”

Technoblade ignored him. He was already ten feet away from the house by the time Philza had stepped outside, booted feet crunching in the snow. Philza huffed and tugged his thin (pink) cloak a bit tighter before he set off after him.

They went past the stables and into the hills. Philza shuffled along carefully, trying not to slip on the snow - one misstep, and he’d be sliding straight into the river below. Technoblade, meanwhile, strode onwards, completely unbothered. They circled around a mountainous area and eventually came to a stop in a snowy area surrounded by sheer cliffs.

“Technoblade,” Philza said. “What is this?”

Technoblade ignored him, making a beeline for one of the walls. He aggressively swiped the snow aside, revealing a button.

“Techno--”

Philza was cut off by the rumbling of redstone. He gaped as the side of the mountain retracted, revealing a hollowed-out vault, lined with chests. Wither skulls covered the walls-- all painted a soft pink, the shade of Technoblade’s hair.

“. . . I am going to *murder* whoever did this.”

Philza blinked slowly, torn between hysterical laughter and gaping at the vault. He distantly realized he was still clutching his coffee mug and raised it to his mouth on autopilot, taking a moment to reorient himself.

(Technoblade had been hiding this from him. Why?

. . . Did he not trust him?)

“I’d rather you not,” he said carefully. “See, he’s actually a pretty good friend of mine--”

“So you *do* know who it is!”

“Maybe.”

“*Tell me.*”

Philza hummed. “Oh, would you look at the time--”

“Phil--”

“I got a lot of things to get through today,” Philza continued, turning on his heel and ambling away. “Horses to feed, mining to do, you know how it is--”

“Phil, you can’t just ignore me--”

“--if I have time, I might even take a scenic flight over the ocean, go see how L’Manberg’s doing--”

“--you can’t even fly anymore--”

“See you later!”

**95.** *(for the previous part of this loop, see 90. in Chapter 18)*

Breathe in. Breathe out. Tommy was wrong. Tommy was *wrong*.

*(“YOU BEAT ME TO DEATH FOR YOUR OWN SICK SATISFACTION!”)*

He did it because he was angry. Tommy killed his cat, the one thing he’d formed an attachment to. The one thing on the server that still cared about him. That still *loved* him.

*(“You killed me so you could-- so you could prove a point! You took my THIRD CANON LIFE to PROVE A FUCKING POINT!”)*

Tommy had called him a liar. So he’d offered proof. What else was he supposed to do?

*(“You a-abused me in exile--”)*

It wasn’t abuse. He’d been teaching Tommy a lesson. Making him *better*. Because Tommy caused problems. All he did was cause problems. He was spoiled. Immature. He thought he owned the world. So Dream had taken it away from him, shown him how *powerless* he was--

*(“You’re a fucking control freak with a god complex!”)*

Tommy locked him in the prison. Tommy let Quackity hurt him. Tommy had *no idea* what it felt like to be trapped in those obsidian walls, cowering in the corner and praying that Quackity wouldn't appear.

Tommy didn't know what it felt like to be tortured.

*("You don't know what Limbo feels like. The fucking-- emptiness, the pain-- and you-- you left me in there for two fucking days.")*

Tommy didn't know what it felt like to lose everything.

*("Dream! DREAM! NO! STOP, PLEASE! I'M SORRY-- PLEASE, NO! I WON'T DO IT AGAIN, PLEASE!")*

Tommy didn't know what it felt like to look into a bubbling wall of lava and-- and imagine--

*("It's never my time to die.")*

Dream tore his mask off and vomited into the sand.

---

"I'm not Quackity," he whispered to the ocean. His words disappeared into the sea breeze. He raised his voice. "I'm *not*."

*Funny*, a voice in his mind replied. It sounded a lot like George. *Have you noticed how everyone sounds the same when they're begging for their lives?*

"It's different," Dream muttered, pulling his knees closer to his chest. "Quackity hurt me because he could. He said it was for the book, but-- but we both knew I would never give it up. He kept visiting anyway. He-- he tortured me because he *could*."

*And you hurt Tommy because you could?*

"No!"

*Then why?*

"He needed to *learn*," Dream snapped. "He's done nothing but cause problems since he joined the server. He tore everyone apart. He turned them against me."

*You turned them against yourself.*

“He turned them against me,” Dream repeated.

*You hurt him.*

“I was fixing him.”

*You killed him.*

“It was to prove a point.”

*Then why did you enjoy it?*

Dream’s jaw twitched. It was true. He’d smiled as Tommy begged for his life, laughed as he stood over the corpse, his hands dripping with blood. He’d felt *exhilarated*.

*Powerful. You felt powerful, and that made you happy.*

“Maybe I did,” he agreed. “But I was trapped. Powerless. Being able to *fight back* after months in that prison--”

*Don’t make excuses.* The voice turned sharp. Angry. It didn’t sound like George anymore. *Exile made you happy too. You weren’t trapped, then.*

Dream gritted his teeth. “I didn’t--”

*You hurt Tommy because it made you feel powerful. Just like Quackity hurt you because he wanted to feel powerful.*

“No, that’s--”

The voice continued, ruthless. *Who wouldn’t want to hurt the monster of the server? Who wouldn’t want to hurt the person **responsible for this mess**? Tommy was the only one who defied your rules, who turned your server into **this**--*

“I’m not Quackity,” he protested, but it sounded weak to his own ears.

*No*, the voice agreed. *You’re worse. Much, much worse. Because you deserved it, and Tommy didn’t.*

Dream stared at the setting sun and said nothing. There was something like recognition hovering in the back of his mind, a slow, stomach-curling awareness that what he’d done was *wrong*. He didn’t want to acknowledge it. Didn’t want to think about it.

*You know I’m right.*

“Shut up,” he whispered. He could feel the realization rising over him like a tidal wave, hanging in the throes of gravity.

*You abused him. You tortured him.*

“I’m not. . . I didn’t. . .”



*You destroyed everything he cared about and took him and **broke him**.*

He dug his nails into his skull and remained silent.

*He begged you, Dream. Like you begged Quackity. Do you remember? Do you remember his voice?*

“. . . Yes,” he whispered. The word came out as a fragile, broken thing. “I do.”

*Say it. Say the fucking truth, for once in your life.*

“I. . .” his voice cracked. “I was wrong. I-- I hurt him because I could. I *manipulated* him, destroyed his country, abu. . . abused him--”

He stopped. Blinked back the burning in his eyes. He was shaking and he couldn’t stop.

“I abused him,” he repeated. Saying it out loud made it worse, in a way, because admitting it to the sea meant he was acknowledging it as a truth. His own voice echoed in his ears, sickly sweet and laced with poison.

Quackity had talked the same way.

*(“I’m your friend, Tommy.”)*

*(“You did this to yourself, Dream. It doesn’t have to be this way-- just give me the book.”)*

The tsunami loomed ever closer, a torrent of terror and guilt and self-hatred. Dream took a shuddering inhale. “I’m. . .” he croaked. “I’m worse than Quackity. I’m a monster.”

*You are.* There was no vindictive pleasure at his acknowledgement, only a quiet fury. *And you’ll live as one for the rest of eternity.*

The wave came crashing down, dragging Dream under.

---

### **Private Messaging: TommyInnit**

*<Dream>: im sorry*

*<Dream>: illeave you alone*

*[3:49 AM]*

*<TommyInnit>: fuck you.*

## Chapter End Notes

Next time on This Absolute Mess of a Timeloop Fic: we speedrun plot. Stay tuned for more!

And [FANART](#) by Caligo!! So cool hksjdl

Below is a rant explaining my stance on Dream because I know some of you want insta-redemption, so look at it before you go yell at me in the comments. If you want to skip to the loop notes, go ahead.

Listen, before you come at me with pitchforks and torches, hear me out. C!Dream did a lot of terrible stuff, and saying that what he did to Tommy wasn't abuse is an effing lie. He essentially went with the route of disproportionate retribution and destroyed Tommy's life because he thought Tommy was the root of all the problems on the server. Dream also went through a traumatic experience in the prison. He didn't deserve it. Nobody deserves to be tortured - the "you deserved it, and Tommy didn't" part DOES NOT reflect my personal views - but just because he was tortured, doesn't mean that he's no longer responsible for what he did. Dream doesn't know that Tommy doesn't know he was tortured. Yes, when Tommy finds out, he's going to be horrified - but it's not going to greatly change his stance on Dream. Just because your abuser gets abused, doesn't mean that it absolves what they did in the past.

That being said, Tommy isn't a saint-- and his actions will be addressed later. The only character I'm an apologist for is Slimecicle--

### **Loop Notes**

**91.** Shower thoughts at 4 in the morning, courtesy of one (1) dead Tommy. When Wilbur questioned him the next day, he acted like he had no idea what Wilbur was talking about.

**94.** Technoblade's villagers got a makeover too. Each one got a fluffy pink mustache to top it off.

# Chapter 20

## Chapter Summary

This chapter has no crack. If you're here for the crack and not the plot, ignore this chapter.

## Chapter Notes

### **THE LOOPS IN THIS CHAPTER ARE IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER.**

bruh I've gotten \*checks notes\* at least 7 comments begging me to go back to pure crack and here I am giving you pure lore. I am so sorry

I am also very sorry about the quality of this chapter??? I dislike how unrealistically fast Dream is changing but I'm gonna cite "this is a fanfiction and c!Dream is trash but the Dream in this fic is slightly better trash"

Lots of spotlighted comments to make up for the lack of crack in this chapter.

### **Spotlighted Comments**

#### **rivkamar2001:**

Techno: Why is everything pink?!?

Phil: \*sips coffee\*

Techno: WHY ARE MY WITHERS PINK?!?

Phil: \*spits out coffee\*

**nyanbinary\_87:** lasagna is spaghetti cake. boats are reverse bathtubs. reality is an illusion the universe is a hologram buy gold GUUUUUUN

**Taran776:** we get incredible comedy and crack and then without any warning just BOOM traumatic redemption arc and then immediately back to Tommy and Dream blowing shit up with glitter

**FoundNotLost14:** Techno, coming back after a long day of searching for

Dream/Tommy: PHIL I COULDN'T FIND HIM >:( THE SNEAKY BASTARD IS HIDING- \*trails off as he sees his ENTIRE HOUSE is covered in bright pink glitter\*

#### **curry\_powder:**

Dream: "Stop"

\*fancy guitar riff\*

"CAUSE WHY'D YOU HAVE TO KILL MY CAT"

"NOW IM GONNA KILL YOU"

\*insert tommy screaming\*

**Anonymous\_something444:** I imagine dream being a creepy little guy who eats teeth

96.

Tommy shot up with a scream.

“W’re safe,” Tubbo slurred, hooking an arm around his chest and dragging him back to the floor. “G’to ‘leep.”

“Sleep,” Ranboo agreed drowsily. Michael continued to snore, oblivious to the world.

Tommy forced himself to take deep breaths, eyes tracing the ceiling of the pillow fort. His heartbeat gradually evened out as the last traces of his nightmare slipped away. He didn’t remember much of it-- just a terrible sense of *loneliness*.

He turned his head to the side, staring at Michael. The piglin boy was lying on his side, arms wrapped around a bee plush Tommy had made for him. Ranboo was half-curled around him, one arm slung over the child and the other half-buried in a mountain of pillows.

*They’re okay, Tommy reminded himself. They’re here. We’re here together.*

He slowly relaxed, melting into the thick blankets piled beneath him. Tubbo made a muffled noise and shifted closer, his arm tightening around Tommy’s shoulders. Tommy rolled his eyes.

*Clingy bitch.*

He reached over and tucked the blanket a bit tighter around Tubbo, then let his eyes fall shut. He’d be alone again the next time the loop reset, but he’d enjoy this easy friendliness while it lasted.

97.

When Dream had gone on a mining expedition, he hadn’t expected to stumble across an underground cavern. The place was *huge* and completely enclosed, with no tunnels in or out aside from the one he’d dug. He wasn’t quite sure where he was in relation to the aboveground SMP, but he was pretty sure this place was located under inhabited lands. Strangely, nobody seemed to have discovered it yet.

He raised his torch higher, inspecting the walls. Underneath the thick layer of grime, he could see the outline of uniform stone bricks. Scraping away the layer of dirt on the floor revealed the same thing. He revised his earlier thought; this wasn’t a cavern, it was a *room*. An old room that had been abandoned for quite a while, but it definitely hadn’t formed naturally. Strangely enough, the entire place was devoid of life; the room was bathed in darkness - perfect spawning conditions for hostile mobs - and yet there wasn’t a single mob in sight.

Dream adjusted his grip on his pickaxe, ignoring the chill that slithered down his spine. He advanced further into the room.

The withered remains of what might have once been pillars jutted out of the floor at regular intervals, built from the same stone as the rest of the room. They appeared to have been destroyed rather than worn away with age; the tops of the ruins were jagged, like the pillars had been smashed to pieces. Chunks of rubble strewn over the floor cemented that theory.

He was about thirty feet in when he saw it. A thin string the color of redstone, nestled in the cracks between two stones. He squatted down to inspect it, only to realize that the string had no visible end-- it continued on into the darkness, originating from somewhere out of the bubble of light from the torch.

Dream rose to his feet. More strings appeared as he moved further in, gradually growing thicker. It wasn't until they'd grown to the width of his ankle Dream realized what they were - vines. Crimson vines as thick as his leg, flourishing in a lightless room. The arrangement suggested they were all growing from a central point - a point that Dream was approaching.

Something glinted in the torchlight. Dream froze in his tracks, but when the object did not move, he moved closer. Whatever it was, it was *huge*. He lifted the torch a bit higher-- and stared.

“What the fuck is this?”

It looked like an egg. A blood-red egg three times the size of a grown man, with vines sprouting from its base. He'd never seen the thing before, and yet. . .

“You look familiar,” he muttered, eyes narrowing. Where had he seen it before?

"Oh right," he realized. Bad had shown it to him back in December, before the whole shitshow with Tommy and the discs. He'd basically forgotten about it after spending two years in prison, though in the blurry memories of his escape, he thought he'd seen red vines on the ground. There weren't any in the arctic, though, so maybe he hadn't. He'd been pretty out of it.

*DR毛爪 .*

Dream whipped around, slashing his torch through the darkness. “Who’s there?!”

*DR毛爪 山爪 毛爪 .*

“That’s me, yeah,” he muttered, eyes darting back and forth. “Who are you? Where are you?”

*乃毛爪 / 爪 毛爪 .*

Dream turned around. No matter how hard he looked, the only thing he could see was--

“Are you the egg?”

*毛爪 .*

Dream let out a huff of disbelief. “Okay,” he said. “You’re-- sentient. You’re a sentient, giant talking egg.”

Y毛\$. The Egg (apparently) hummed. 山#凡T / 5 / T Y 田 4 D毛5/尺  
毛 爪 田 5T, D尺毛凡爪 山凡5 T凡K毛几?

Dream blinked. “I-- what?”

山#凡T D 田 Y 田 4 山凡几T?

Dream hesitated. He had absolutely no reason to trust the Egg, but-- it was just an egg. Harmless-- it couldn’t even move. It wasn’t like the Egg (or whatever the fuck it was) would remember anything he told it next loop. And he-- he really wanted to talk to someone. By the time this loop started, he had basically no friends or allies left.

“... I want a lot of things,” he admitted. “Mostly just-- to get out of the loops, for one. And to become a better person.”

T#毛 厶 田 田 P\$?

“Yeah. Time loops. I’ve gone through. . . ninety, now.”

山#Y D 田 Y 田 4 山/5# T 田 毛5匚凡P毛?

“I’m trapped. I don’t-- nothing I do matters anymore.” He laughed. “Hell, I could slaughter everyone on this server and-- and next loop, they’d all be walking around again. I could become *friends* with everyone on the server and next loop we’d just go back to being enemies.” He took a deep breath. “I hate it. It’s. . . it’s. . . it *hurts*, when I wake up and-- everything’s back to the way it was.”

The Egg remained silent for a moment. / 5毛毛, it said at last. / 山/厶厶 千尺毛毛  
Y 田 4 .

Dream’s heart stilled. He could barely breathe, overwhelmed by a rush of hope. “You can. . . you can do that?”

7 田 / 几 爪毛, D尺毛凡爪. / 山/厶厶 G/V毛 Y 田 4 凡几Y T# / 几G  
Y 田 4 山/5# 千 田 尺.

The statement should have set off alarm bells in his head, but. . . he felt like he could trust the Egg. No, he *knew* he could trust the Egg. It had no reason to harm him. It was just trying to help. It was being a good friend. He wanted that, didn’t he?

Dream was distantly aware that his torch had gone out, but he couldn’t think past the pounding in his ears. The Egg was glowing, effusing the room with scarlet light. It was powerful. It would help him. Dream took a breath.

“What do I have to do?”

---

“Tommy!”

Tommy stopped in his tracks. “Dream.”

“Hey,” Dream said. He sounded-- happy, almost. “Can I talk to you?”

Tommy sneered, turning around with a *fuck you* on his lips. And froze. “Oh,” he breathed. “Oh *shit*.”

Dream smiled, oblivious to his sudden wariness. “Hi, Tommy.”

Tommy ran through a quick mental checklist. Red eyes? Check. Red clothes? Check. Deranged smile? Check-- though the last mark probably had less to do with being an egghead and more with the man’s mental stability (or lack of it). “Lemme guess,” he said. “You’re here to take me to the Egg?”

“Yes,” Dream said, then did a double take. “Wait, you know about the Egg?”

“Yeah,” Tommy muttered. He eyed the distance between them, trying to gauge whether he could make a run for it. “It was a . . . big thing, while you were in jail.”

Dream’s smile faltered slightly at the mention of the prison. He recovered quickly. “Then-- then you know how amazing it is?”

“I wouldn’t say *amazing*,” Tommy hedged, inching backward. He couldn’t outrun Dream, but the Egg had definitely affected his intelligence, much like how it had affected Bad’s. Maybe he could trick him into letting him go? “It made Tubbo cry.”

“The Egg can give you anything you want.”

“Right, and I suppose the Egg can give me women.”

“The Egg can give you all the women you could--”

“I’m gonna stop you right there,” Tommy interrupted, fighting back a visceral reaction. Dream was an egghead and trying to bribe Tommy with women. Tommy wasn’t sure whether he should burst into hysterical laughter or start screaming. Either would be an appropriate response to the situation. “I’m not going to the Egg, Dream.”

“Hear me out,” Dream pleaded. Tommy took another step back, only for Dream to step forward. “It knows how to break the loops, Tommy. It can get us out of this.”

“No,” Tommy snapped. Dream probably hadn’t been Infected for as long as Bad was-- maybe he could reason with him. “Look, I’m not-- I’ve seen the Egg, and it doesn’t do *shit*. It’s *lying*, Dream-- It can’t-- it can’t get us out of the loops.”

Dream narrowed his eyes. “You don’t know that.”

Tommy scoffed. “You know what happened to Bad? He was the one who found it in Loop Zero-- ended up serving it because the Egg took Skeppy and Bad thought the only way to get him back was to join him. He ended up hurting a whole bunch of people and lost most of his friends-- all for the Egg. It’s a fuckin’ manipulator, Dream. It’s using you.”

Dream scowled. “The Egg is my *friend*,” he snapped. “It wants to help me.”

Tommy laughed. “If it really wanted to get you out,” he said, “wouldn’t it have done it by now?”

“These. . . these things take time.”

“Yeah? But now it’s just yelling at you to kill me, ey? The only *other* looper.”

Doubt flickered across Dream’s face. Tommy pounced on the opening. “The Egg doesn’t want to help you,” he insisted. “It’s lying. It’s using you to get more power. You *know* that, you’re just too much of a pussy to admit you got tricked.”

Dream’s axe wavered. “I. . . I don’t-- *gah!*”

Tommy took a step back as Dream hunched over, dropping his axe in favor of clamping his hands over his ears. Church Prime was nearby; if he ran now, while Dream was distracted, he could probably stay ahead of Dream long enough to get to safety.

Dream went still. Tommy made an executive decision and *bolted*.

He was maybe halfway down the Prime Path when he glanced back, only to speed up when he saw Dream bearing down on him, eyes blazing crimson. “YOU DON’T HAVE TO DO THIS!” he shrieked, hoping against hope that someone would hear him.

“Come with me,” Dream called, sounding slightly strained.

Tommy flipped him off and ran even faster. The Church was in sight now. He just had to make it another hundred feet or so and then--

A low whistling noise filled the air. Tommy threw himself sideways just as a bundle of TNT landed where he had been standing moments before. The resulting explosion knocked him flat on his back. He ruthlessly stomped down the memories that were trying to resurface and staggered to his feet, shaking his head in a futile attempt to rid his ears of the ringing noise. Dream was approaching with broad strides, clearly confident that he had trapped Tommy.

Unfortunately for him, Tommy had a habit of unpleasantly surprising people.

He reached into his inventory, grabbed the first thing he could find, and hurled it at Dream before booking it. The moment the Holy Lands were within reach, he lunged forward, landing on the grass and rolling with the fall. He hastily pushed himself to his feet and stood, ignoring his screaming muscles.



Dream stopped in his tracks, mere *inches* from the border of the Holy Lands. His gaze flitted across the Church before landing on Tommy. He shifted his grip on his axe.

Tommy stepped back, well out of axe range. “No fighting on the Holy Lands,” he reminded him.

Dream glared but complied, lowering his weapon. “Tommy,” he said. “You’re making this difficult.”

“Yeah, well, that’s what I do, innit?” Tommy snarked. “Make everything difficult.”

“The Egg can *help* us, Tommy. It can get us out--”

“And even if it could, we’d be stuck under its control after we’re out. No freedom there.”

“It doesn’t control us.”

Tommy raised an eyebrow. “Yeah? Then what was that little show back there?”

“It was. . . talking to me.”

“Seemed to give you a headache.” When Dream remained silent, Tommy sighed. “Look, Dream-- just-- no. Leave. I’m not gonna join your shitty egg cult-- I’ve been recruited way too many times, and it never turns out good.”

“It’s-- it’ll be different,” Dream said.

Tommy scoffed. “Look, no means no. What part did you miss? The n, the o, or the silent ‘fuck off’ in the middle?”

Dream’s eyes narrowed. He stepped forward and Tommy readied himself for another chase, accompanied by some grand spiel about the Egg.

It never came. Dream froze, face going blank. Slowly, he took another step forward. The crimson in his eyes suddenly seemed less prominent.

Tommy blinked. What was happening?

“I. . .” Dream frowned, shaking his head. “The Egg-- it’s. . .”

“Bad,” Tommy said bluntly. His eyes strayed down to Dream’s feet, which had crossed onto Holy Land. Due to Dream's early disappearance and Tommy's meddling, the Egg hadn't been discovered and the Eggpire hadn't formed. The Egg might have been weakened by its lack of followers, so maybe it was more susceptible to everything Prime-related - even the Holy Lands.

Something flickered across Dream’s face. Tommy revised his earlier assessment-- the proximity to the Church might be a factor, but some part of Dream also appeared to be fighting the Infection. All Tommy had to do was give him another push.

“It’s lying, Dream.”

“It’ll get us out,” Dream repeated, sounding less like a human and more like a broken record.

“Which it hasn’t done,” Tommy pointed out. “I bet if I killed you right now, you’d just wake up in the past again.”

“You’re. . . lying,” Dream said. It came out stilted. He frowned and shook his head, like a dog trying to rid itself of a gnat. When he looked up again, his eyes were a solid crimson. “You’re lying to me. Making me doubt. The Egg doesn’t like that.”

“Yeah, well, the Egg can go fuck itself.”

Dream looked sad. Wait, no, that was wrong. He looked *disappointed*, shoulders pulled back and disapproving stare affixed on Tommy. Tommy had felt that stare many, many times in exile.

“I’m sorry about this, Tommy,” Dream said. He was using the ‘it’s for your own good’ voice. Fuck. “But when I bring you back, you’ll see. The loop won’t start again. The Egg ended it.”

Tommy took a moment to process those words. A moment too long, apparently, because suddenly there was netherite in his neck and then *agony agony ag--*

**98.**

He opened his eyes to see Dream disappearing in a puff of smoke.

Tommy stumbled, the axe slipping from his fingers. “Oh shit,” he gasped, staggering forward even as he raised his hands to his throat. “Shit-- fuck-- Dream! Dream, you-- *you fucker--* what the *fuck* is wrong with you?!”

There was a moment of chilling silence. And then Dream *howled*.

The crowd gathered behind Tommy collectively flinched, several falling back into fighting stances. Tommy paid them no mind. “DREAM!” he shouted.

The screams tapered off into retching. A cold pit formed in Tommy’s stomach. “DREAM,” he shouted again. “DREAM, CAN YOU HEAR ME? IS IT STILL THERE?”

“In my--” there was a crash. “Nonono I did it again I’m sorry please no get out get out get OUT--”

A hand landed on Tommy’s shoulder, burning hot. “Tommy, what the hell is going on?!”

“Later,” Tommy snapped. “Get down here, let us help--”

Dream hissed. “No-- shut up. SHUT UP--”

“Tommy,” Sapnap snarled.

“FIGHT IT, DAMNIT!” Tommy shouted. “IT’S FUCKIN’ WEAK RIGHT NOW!”

Dream’s ragged breathing cut off with a hiss. Tommy gritted his teeth.

“Fuck it,” he muttered. “Who’s the fastest person here?”

“Tommy--”

“Dream got-- Infected,” Tommy snapped, scrambling for a way to explain without telling them about the timeloops-- they didn’t have *time*. “By a-- by a brain parasite, fuck, I don’t know what the fuck it is but it changed his thought process and shit-- killing him snapped him outta it, but if we want to keep the thing *out* of his head, we need to dunk him in Prime water.”

Several people went pale. “He’s. . .?” Puffy asked.

She was cut off by a loud thud above them. “Shit,” Tommy cursed, rushing forward and vaulting onto the platform. It rose under his weight, accompanied by the rumble of redstone.

The moment his head cleared the top, he assessed the situation. Dream was lying on the floor next to the bed he’d respawned from, curled in a ball and fingers tangled in his hair. His cloak was a familiar dark green, but Tommy wasn’t reassured.

“Dream,” he said loudly. The man jerked, head raising just enough for Tommy to see one eye - stretched wide and pupil shrunk, darting wildly back and forth. The iris oscillated between toxic green and pale crimson.

So the Egg could reach across loops. Even worse, it could reach across *deaths*-- which meant that if Tommy just killed Dream or threw him in the prison, he’d come back next loop still Infected and still determined to kill Tommy and/or drag him to the Egg.

Tommy took a deep breath and shoved down his rising panic. The Egg’s hold had obviously been weakened, though Tommy wasn’t sure if it was because of the loops or because Dream had been on Holy Lands. Dream was actively fighting it now, though, so that was a bonus. Either way, there was still a chance he could fix this.

“Dream,” he repeated. “I can get you to Church Prime, but I need to know if you’re gonna stab me.”

Dream managed a jerky shake of his head. Tommy strode forward and yanked him up, slinging an arm over his shoulder and letting the man use him as a crutch. His skin crawled with discomfort, but he reminded himself that this was better than having to deal with an Infected Dream hunting him down for the rest of the loop. They somehow managed to make it onto the platform without any issues. When it started moving, though, Dream nearly fell over, forcing Tommy to yank him back up.

“What the fuck is wrong with you?”

“Figh-ting,” Dream grunted. “Doesn’t-- like that.”

“Yeah I bet it doesn’t,” Tommy muttered. The others were in sight now, but still out of hearing range. Tommy lowered his voice. “Listen, I told the others the Egg possessed you or some shit and killing you woke you up, so stick to that story this loop-- unless you want to get tossed in the Vault again.”

Dream shuddered, head lolling. “You lied.”

Tommy blinked. “I-- of fuckin’ course I lied, what else was I--”

“We’re back again, you made me-- no-- shut *up*--”

Ah. He was talking to the Egg, not Tommy. “Ignore it. It gets worse the more you talk to it.”

The platform had reached the bottom. Tommy wasted no time dragging the other looper forward, thrusting him straight into Punz, who stumbled at the sudden weight. “The Church,” Tommy blurted. “Dump-- dump him in the waterfall, *hurry* or--”

Punz was gone before he’d finished talking. Tommy swallowed the bitter taste in his mouth, shoving away a memory of the mercenary’s blank expression as he slid a sword into Quackity’s back. Punz had never been on their side, had he?

“T-Tommy?”

Tommy flinched and whipped around, meeting Tubbo’s gaze. His friend twitched, gaze darting from Tommy’s shaking hands to his face.

“Are you okay?”

Okay? He was the *furthest fucking thing* from okay.

“I need to check on Dream,” was all he said. He was the only one with knowledge about the Egg at this moment in time. He needed to see if it was really out of Dream’s head. Needed to, because if it wasn’t-- if it was *still there*, the loops would get a whole lot worse.

“Tommy--”

“Sorry, Tubbo.” He brushed past him, stumbling towards the portal. “I need-- it’s *important*--”

“Wait,” Sapnap said. Tommy rounded on him with the fiercest glare he could muster, but Sapnap stood his metaphorical ground. “What happened?”

“I told you already--”

“You told us he got infected with a ‘brain parasite’. That--”

“Look, I’ll fuckin’ explain *later*,” Tommy snapped. “When this is over, we can hunt down the Egg and burn it to ashes, but right now I need to make sure it’s not still in his head.”

“Egg?” Tubbo asked, but Tommy was distracted by Sam, who had appeared on his left, eyes concerned.

“Tommy, you’re in no shape to travel through the Nether. Let us handle this.”

“I’m the only one who knows what we’re dealing with--”

“So tell us.”

Tommy bit back the urge to scream in frustration and whipped around, storming towards the portal. Someone attempted to grab his arm but he shook them off.

“I’m going to the fucking Church,” he snarled, and leapt into the portal before anyone could stop him.

---

The first thing Tommy saw when he entered the Church was Dream, drenched to the bone and collapsed on a pew beside the waterfall. Punz was sitting on the opposite end of the pew, gaze fixed straight ahead and sword lying across his lap. His eyes flicked to Tommy as he entered. “I put him in the waterfall. He’s semi-coherent now.”

“Can he still hear it?” Tommy demanded.

“It’s very quiet,” Dream rasped.

“So that’s a yes. *Fuck.*”

Punz eyed the waterfall. “We didn’t try drinking it. Is it safe?”

“Yeah, drinking it might be better.” Tommy glanced at his inventory, then at Punz. “Bucket?”

Punz wordlessly produced a bucket, dumping the water it contained onto the carpet of the Church before handing it to him. Tommy scooped a chunk out of the waterfall and held it out to Dream, who took it with shaking hands.

They watched in silence as Dream took several gulps of water, then shook his head. The last of the red tint faded from his pupils.

“It’s gone,” he reported. Punz sighed and closed his eyes, only to stiffen when voices became audible in the distance.

Tommy went still, his heart racing. He wasn’t ready. Judging by Dream’s expression, he wasn’t either. Punz took one look at them and stood, stashing his sword in his inventory.

“I’ll stall them,” he said. “Five minutes sound okay?”

“Ten,” Tommy said.

“Ten,” Punz agreed. He turned and stalked out of the Church.

The silence was deafening. Tommy looked anywhere but at Dream, staring at the window to their left like it offered all the secrets of the universe. He remained tense, half-expecting Dream to attack him. Dream, for his part, was just as uncomfortable, fidgeting as the silence grew more and more strained.

“Here,” he blurted, thrusting the bucket towards Tommy and nearly dropping it when his muscles reminded him that there were consequences to respawning (and being Infected, on top of that). “I, uh, don’t need it anymore.”

Tommy snatched the bucket from his hands, grateful for a distraction. He hurried over to the waterfall and tipped the bucket over, pouring the remaining water out.

“I’m sorry,” Dream croaked.

Tommy stilled, knuckles white around the handle of the bucket. He didn’t turn around.

Dream closed his eyes. “I’m sorry,” he repeated. “I know an apology isn’t worth anything, but. . . I get it now.”

“Do you?” Tommy asked stiffly.

“I do. Tommy, I-- I wasn’t your friend. I lied to you. I hurt you because. . . because I enjoyed it. Not because you deserved it. It was-- it was abuse. I abused you.”

Tommy stared down at the carpet, trying to sort through the whirlpool of emotions in his chest. On one hand, hearing Dream *acknowledge* what he’d done was the final confirmation-- the last vindication that let him know he’d been in the right all along. But at the same time, Dream could be lying. Trying to manipulate him into working together.

“You did,” he said at last.

“I’m sorry,” Dream murmured. He *sounded* sincere. Just like he’d sounded sincere when he told Tommy he was his friend.

“You’re sorry,” Tommy repeated, turning around.

Dream ducked his head, hiding his expression. His face was an open book-- probably why he wore a mask. “I am,” he affirmed.

“I don’t believe you.”

“Okay,” Dream said. He looked away from Tommy, picking at the hem of his hoodie. “I-- yeah. That’s fair.”

Tommy stared at him.

Dream took a deep breath. “I wasn’t lying in those messages,” he said. “I’ll. . . leave you alone. Give you space for as long as you want.”

Tommy snorted. “Yeah? And what brought on your sudden change of heart?”

Dream opened his mouth. Closed it. Picked a string off his hoodie. “I. . . looked at what I did from. From an outsider’s perspective.”

So that’s all it took. All it would have taken Dream to stop being such a dick was some basic human empathy. Tommy gritted his teeth.

“This better not be another lie, Dream, or I swear--”

“It’s not,” Dream promised. “I-- you don’t have any reason to trust me, but-- really. I’ll stay as far away from you as I can.”

Right. Well, the only way to figure out if this was a lie was to test it. If he was faking, he’d probably crack and hunt Tommy down before twenty loops had passed. If he was genuinely apologetic. . .

Tommy shook himself. “Can you still hear the Egg?”

Dream blinked at the non sequitur. “I-- no. No, it’s gone.”

“Then I’m leaving. You can explain what happened to the others.”

Tommy stared at Dream, waiting for the other man to protest or reach out. Dream stayed where he was. “I’m not stopping you.”

It felt like a trap. Tommy kept his eyes on Dream even as he retreated towards the door. Dream just laid back against the pew and closed his eyes. He was letting him go.

Tommy all but fled the Church, his pulse pounding in his ears.

**99.**

“Listen, can I. . . can I ask you about something?”

“Go ahead,” Puffy said. Tommy clasped his hands and looked down at the floor.

“So there’s this. . . this person. He hurt me. A lot.” He bit the inside of his cheek, fiddling with his fingers. “He tried to kill my friends. He tried to kill *me*. ”

Puffy remained silent. Patient. Tommy let out a huff, glaring down at the floor. He sank a little further into the plush chair he was sitting in. “He’s trying to do better now. Or, at least that’s what he *says*. He-- I told him to stay away from me. And. And he’s respected that. Fuck, he even apologized to me.” He ran a hand through his hair. “But I don’t-- he

apologized, he's trying to do better, so everything's fine, right? I should just-- stop bitching and forgive him--"

"Tommy," Puffy said firmly. Tommy slowly looked up to meet her gaze. "Just because he apologized doesn't mean that you have to forgive him."

"But he's better now," Tommy muttered. "He's *trying*."

"Forgiveness depends on you," Puffy said. "Do you understand? Not him. *You*. Forgive him when you feel ready."

Tommy snorted. "And if I never feel ready?"

"Then never forgive him." At Tommy's startled look, she frowned. "You don't owe him anything, Tommy. He hurt you in the past, and *maybe* he's starting to become a better person, but that doesn't mean you have to forgive him."

Tommy gnawed on the inside of his cheek. "Okay," he started slowly. "I . . . I get that. But there's. . . there's a bit more to it. It's-- complicated, but-- we're. We're kinda stuck in this situation where-- where I gotta-- *ugh*."

Puffy waited patiently as he buried his face in his hands and took a few deep breaths.

"Okay," he said at last. "So-- hypothetically--"

"Hypothetically," Puffy corrected.

"Hypothetically, if, like, someone was trapped in-- a room. With. With someone who hurt them a-- a long time ago. And they both need to find a way out, and-- and it looks like the only way they can do that is if they work with-- *him* -- wh-what do they do?" He glared down at his hands. "Fuck-- this is a terrible analogy."

Puffy hummed. "Would they die if they stay in the room?"

Tommy hesitated. "No, but. . . they'd lose their freedom. And they'd be stuck with the guy that made their lives living hell."

Puffy stayed quiet for a long, long, moment, rolling her pen between her fingers. At last she sighed. "Normally. . . I would say that the decision is completely up to them, but that's not what you're asking, huh?" At Tommy's nod, she bit her lip, tapping her pen on her chin. "If I was in that situation. . . personally, I would try to get out as fast as possible."

"So you'd work with him."

"I don't know," Puffy admitted. "It all really depends on what the person *did* to me. If I was desperate enough, I'd work with them-- but only as a last resort. I'd-- I'd try to find my own way out first."

Tommy nodded. "I-- okay. Yeah. That makes sense. Thanks."



Puffy hesitated. “Tommy. . . working with someone doesn’t-- in a desperate situation, working with them doesn’t mean you have to forgive them.”

Tommy blinked. “It. . . doesn’t?”

“No. You work with them because external factors force you to. There’s no forgiveness in it.” She straightened and met his gaze with a firm, gentle stare. “I’d make it clear to him that I don’t forgive him, and that I wouldn’t take any of his bullshit. We’d both be stuck together, and if we need to work together to get out, then we’re on equal footing. He wouldn’t have any power over me.”

Tommy stared at her, mouth hanging half-open. He sat back and swallowed a few times, trying to remove the lump in his throat. “He. . . wouldn’t have any power over you.”

“He wouldn’t.”

Puffy knew the situation probably wasn’t hypothetical at all. But she also knew Tommy, knew that if she pushed, he’d just clam up and refuse to talk further. She was a therapist right now, and her main concern was helping him work through his trauma, not push him deeper into it. The best she could do was offer him some advice and wait until he trusted her enough to approach her. Though if things got out of hand. . .

Tommy knit his fingers together. “Thanks,” he said quietly. “I. . . I think I just. Realized. A lot of shit. So yeah. Thank you.”

Puffy smiled, recognizing the gratitude in his voice. “Glad I could help.” She turned back to her clipboard. “So. . . same time next week?”

“Mm.” Tommy shifted in his seat. “Wait, actually-- can we, uh, postpone? Just for a week or two? I think-- I need to figure some stuff by myself.”

Puffy nodded. “Does the 14th work? That’s in three weeks.”

“Yeah, that’s fine.” The teenager grinned at her, and though it didn’t quite reach his eyes, there was genuine warmth in it. “Thanks again, Puffy.”

“It’s no problem,” Puffy assured. She pushed herself to her feet and stretched, letting out a satisfied sigh as her back cracked. “Well, that’s it for today. Next appointment in three weeks, but feel free to drop by anytime you want, ‘kay?”

Tommy raised an eye. “Even at two in the morning?”

Puffy side-eyed him. “Emergencies only,” she declared. “A girl needs her beauty sleep.”

Tommy smirked. “Of course, Captain. Whatever you say, Captain.”

“No, that’s not-- that’s not--” His head ached. “I don’t understand. It’s not-- *why*? What’s happening? Everything’s *different*.”

There was a loud thud behind him. He whipped around, startled, only to trip over carpet and bash his hip against the corner of his desk. “What--”

The intruder raised one hand, even as he tried to push himself off the floor. He was covered in ash and sported a bloody gash across the front of his chest. “Hi. Sorry. I’m the one that got you into this mess.”

“You’re hurt.”

The man choked out a wheezing, weak laugh, and hobbled over to sink down against a wall. “Yeah. Probably have ten minutes, fifteen if I stretch it. Do you-- *ugh* -- do you have a regen potion?”

A pause. “I, no, but-- wait, I can-- I can get you one. Um--”

“Then don’t worry about it. ‘M not gonna last for much longer anyways. Thank Prime you’re here though, there might still be a chance to f--” he shifted, then let out a pained gasp. “--f-fix it.”

“What. . . what happened?”

“Things. Bad things.” The intruder let out a labored wheeze. Blood dribbled down his chin. “I’ll give you the main points, grab something to write with. Th-ther’s a lot you’ll have to do.”

## Chapter End Notes

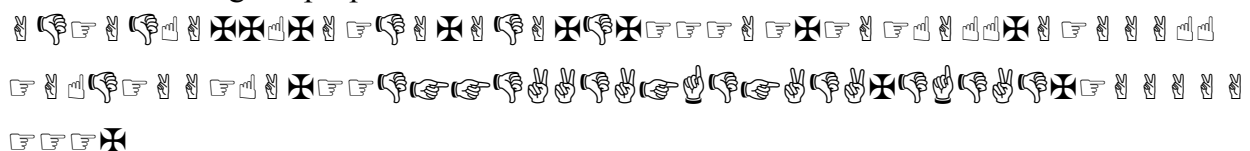
No, the loops don't restart when they die. Every time it happens, it's a coincidence. Both Dream and Tommy are under the impression that that's what happens, though, and assume that every time a loop started without them dying, the other person died Also. Do not spend longer than ten minutes on today's code if you can't figure it out. Don't waste your life trying to decode a phrase in the endnotes of a fanfiction.

## Loop Notes

**98.**When burning the Egg failed to damage it, they covered it in obsidian. Thankfully, it didn't cause anymore problems that loop.

**99.** Maybe things aren't completely hopeless.

**100.** At least he got a proper funeral this time.



Alphabet/Substitution Grid (5 x 5, left to right, top to bottom): ☹️☒☠️🇫🇹❄️👊👉👋☾☀️

💧☒👉☹️👉👋🇫🇹☹️👉👊☠️☒☒👊

Keyword: FUNERAL

# Chapter 21

## Chapter Summary

back to our regularly scheduled crack!

## Chapter Notes

Thank you all for your patience. I've got a better grasp on this mess of a plot now :D

### Spotlighted Comments

**fivewickets:** this is the only chapter that hasn't given me emotional whiplash and that's because it's 100% composed of angst?

**DarkEndeR:** The egg is a foetus. Tommy and dream are trying to stop a embryo. Discuss.

...

FETUS I MEANT FETUS

**kukutajam:**



And shoutout to **Merkisthename** for decoding the message last chapter so quickly!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

## 101.

Schlatt was having the shittiest month of his life. No, that was not an exaggeration.

It all started when Tommy died trying to escape Manberg. At first, Schlatt had been happy about that - not only did it remove a potential problem from the equation, Wilbur had also gone ballistic and attacked Punz, losing his second life in the process. Tubbo unfortunately got away, but Schlatt wasn't too worried about him - Tubbo was a yes-man at best, and without someone to order him around, he'd probably just waste away in the wilderness. And of course Quackity had been pretty upset about the kid's death, but he was powerless to do anything about it.

Tommy was dead, Wilbur and Tubbo were on the run, and Schlatt was the president of Manberg. So yeah, Schlatt was pretty satisfied with how things turned out.

And then Tommy came back as a ghost. Because of *course* the one time things went right for Schlatt, they'd go sour immediately afterwards. The ghost had appeared smack-dab in the middle of Manberg a day after the elections, named himself *Toast* of all things, and proceeded to become a gigantic pain in the ass. He'd randomly pop up behind Schlatt, say something in that fucking *echoey* voice of his, and slowly sink into the floor while maintaining eye contact. Schlatt did his best to ignore him, but holding a cabinet meeting was *really fucking hard* when all the cabinet members were staring at the ghost hissing ominous threats (in *Latin*, for no apparent reason) behind him.

Things went from bad to *worse* when Dream's ghost turned up a week after Tommy. Nobody knew where or how he'd died, but Schlatt was pretty sure he'd drowned - kinda obvious, given how he was constantly dripping water. The ghost had the *irritating* habit of pelting hapless passersby with water balloons that apparently just *appeared* in his hands. For some reason, he seemed to go out of his way to antagonize Schlatt-- Schlatt had been woken up more than once by a balloon to the face.

The last straw was when *every fucking bottle* of booze disappeared from Manberg-- even the ones Schlatt had *hidden*. He *knew* the ghosts were behind this somehow, but not only was proof difficult to produce, it was also impossible to punish an incorporeal being whose continued existence depended on pure spite.

Which led to where he was now, hunched over his desk as he tried to finish a contract draft. His eye twitched as his patience finally snapped, and he slammed his hands down on his desk and turned a withering glare on the entity hovering above him.

"*What,*" he snarled, "*the fuck do you want?!*"

Tommy, who had been ~~looming~~ *looming* over him in a T-pose for the better part of an hour, offered him a ghastly smile. "*You soul*"

Great, he could do a freaky voice too. Schlatt took a deep breath, doing his best to fight through the pounding in his head (seriously, quitting alcohol cold turkey was *not fun*), and made a valiant attempt to reassemble his composure. "Don't have one, try again."

Tommy's smile just widened. "*I take payment in cobblestone too.*"

Schlatt ground his teeth. "If I give you a stack cobblestone, will you leave me alone?"

"*Two stacks, and you'll have a deal!*" The ghost chirped. "*But you gotta mine it yourself-- I won't take it otherwise.*"

"Fine," Schlatt growled. "Deal."

---

Two hours of mining and a close call with a creeper later, Schlatt stormed back into Manberg. Several people sent him bewildered looks as he passed by, but his glower warded off any questions about his dirt-stained clothes and distinct lack of eyebrows.

He dragged himself into his office and dumped the sack of cobblestone on the floor, glaring at the ghost lounging in *his* chair. "I got your fucking cobblestone. Now get the fuck out of Manberg."

*"Pleasure doing business with you,"* Tommy sang. He swiped the bag into his inventory and promptly dived through the floor.

Schlatt fell into his chair with a groan, only to jolt up when something cold seeped through the back of his suit. He swiped a hand across the back of his head, grimacing when his fingers came away covered in green slime. A glance at his desk showed that several *very important documents* had suffered the same fate.

"Tommy Innit, you *son of a--*"

---

"Who the fuck uses this much fine print?" Schlatt squinted at the paper. The tiny letters did not become any clearer. "I'd need a fucking microscope to r--"

*"You didn't take your calcium supplements."*

"FUCK!" Schlatt screamed, jumping out of his chair and whipping around. Dream stared back at him, gaze flat. "Fuck-- you almost gave me a heart attack!"

*"You didn't take your calcium supplements,"* Dream repeated. He held out a little green bottle filled with white pills.

Schlatt snatched the bottle from him, slightly surprised to find it dry. "How the fuck did you get into--" Dream raised an eyebrow. "Right. Ghost." The president huffed. "Look, I already paid off your little friend, so if you could just fuck off--"

*"But you didn't pay me."*

"Fine, okay. What do I need to do for you to leave me alone?"

*"Take care of yourself."*

Schlatt opened his mouth. Closed it. Repeated the action several times. "I . . . what?"

*"I want you to take care of yourself,"* the ghost said. *"When I'm sure you won't die of a heart attack or run Manberg into the ground, I'll leave you alone."*

Schlatt scrubbed a hand down his face. "Okay, but why? I thought you hated me."

*"I don't."*

"What the fuck was up with the water balloons then?"

*". . . Hydration."*

"Hydration," Schlatt deadpanned, slightly hysterical. "Fuck it, sure. I'll do it, but on one condition - no more water balloons."

*"No more water balloons,"* the ghost confirmed. *"I'll even be nicer. . . but only if you hold up your end of the deal."*

"Look, I'll do whatever the fuck you want - just *leave me alone.*"

---

'Being nicer', according to Dream, apparently entailed following him around, constantly nagging him about whatever pills he forgot to take and also *destroying every cigarette or bottle of alcohol Schlatt managed to acquire*. Usually by throwing it off a tall building. Schlatt gave up on fighting him after the fifth incident, which had involved two forks, a dirt block, and high-velocity parkour. Quackity was still getting therapy for that one.

The amount of effort it took to defy Dream just wasn't worth it. Schlatt found himself begrudgingly practicing self-care, actually going to sleep in a bed and drinking at least four glasses of water a day. If his past self could see him now, he'd be *appalled*.

Begrudgingly, he'd admit that he felt a lot better nowadays. Getting out of bed didn't make his head spin. He could jog to his office without keeling over from muscle exhaustion (though it did leave him a bit out of breath). Hell, he even *felt* better when he looked in the mirror and saw a confident, competent leader instead of the drunkard he'd been becoming.

Manberg got better, too. Coerced or not, Schlatt was invested in improving his nation. With Dream's blessing, he actively looked for opportunities to expand into the Greater SMP. Infrastructure flourished. The citizens begrudgingly accepted his rule and even grew to appreciate his competence once he lowered taxes. Niki wasn't even trying to stab him anymore! Progress.

Then on a Tuesday, when Schlatt had just finished up his last batch of paperwork for the day, Dream swept into his office and slapped a packet on his desk. Schlatt looked down at it, looked up at Dream's beaming smile, and sighed.

"What is it?"

Dream's grin widened. *"Toast's been doing some work in Pogtopia,"* he said. *"He convinced Wilbur to offer a trade deal and economic alliance."*



Schlatt stared at him, confused, then realized that ‘Toast’ was Tommy. “Okay,” he said, “first, what the fuck is a Pogtopia, second, why the fuck is Wilbur agreeing to work with me?”

*“Pogtopia is Wilbur’s new nation. He built it with Tubbo after you ran them out. They’ve got a thriving drug industry-- and a black market set up in Manberg. Which is, uh, actually pretty vital to your economy. This trade deal just makes it an official market. Instead of. You know.”*

Schlatt’s eye twitched. “So you’re telling me,” he said, “that *Wilbur* is running a black market in my nation.”

*“And you’re the only one in the country who doesn’t know about it,”* Dream confirmed cheerily. *“Yup.”*

“I’m the fucking *president!*”

*“And everyone likes the potions more than they like you, so nobody told you. Economics 101.”*

Schlatt took a deep, *deep* breath, then glared down at the packet on his desk. “How many pages is this?”

*“Seventy. Don’t worry, only half of it is fine print.”*

Schlatt resisted the urge to bury his face in his hands. Some days, he was proud to be the president of Manberg.

Other days, he was tempted to just let Quackity take over and run off to become a farmer. At least there’d be less paperwork.

## **102.**

“Tommy, man, please, you gotta help me--”

Tommy took a step back. “Woah there big Q, you gotta tell me what you need help with.”

Quackity took a deep breath. “Right. Yeah. I-- I lost the rings.”

“You *what?*”

“I *know*,” Quackity hissed. “Please, Tommy, you gotta help me find them!”

“I thought Tubbo was the ring boy! Why the fuck are you asking me?!”

“Because you made them! I don’t know-- I thought you’d just know!”

“Quackity, I don’t have a *telepathic connection* with the shit I make. Why didn’t you just send a server message and ask if anyone’s seen it?”

Quackity performed an accurate impression of someone who had been slapped with a fish. Tommy rolled his eyes and pulled out his communicator.

<TommyInnit>: *alrigit fuckers which one of u has the rings*

<Sapnap>: *wait by rings do you mean THE rings*

<TommyInnit>: *no i mean the rings my uncle gave me to chuck into a volcano*

<TommyInnit>: *YES T H E RINGS WHAT OTHER RINGS ARE THERE*

<Sapnap>: *OH SHIT*

<Dream>: *please dont tell me you lost the rings two hours before the ceremony*

<Dream>: *@Tubbo\_*

<Tubbo\_>: *Q nevr gave them to me??*

<Quackity>: *ohh wait I remember now*

<Quackity>: *I couldnt find you and you didnt reply to your messages so I gave them to ranboo to give to you*

<Dream>: *you gave them to ranboo??*

<Dream>: *the memory boy???*

<Dream>: *that ranboo????*

<Quackity>: *in hindsight it might n ot have been the smartest decision*

<Tubbo\_>: *@Ranboo what did you do*

<Ranboo>: *haha*

<Ranboo>: *so*

<Ranboo>: *funny story*

<Ranboo>: *I was hungry*

<Ranboo>: *I made bread*

<Ranboo>: *there was something crunchy in the bread*

<Ranboo>: *I assumed it was some rocks in the wheat but I might have been wrong*

<Tubbo\_>: *Ranboo.*

<Tubbo\_>: *did you*

*<Ranboo>: perhaps*

*<Ranboo>: there is. a strong likelihood*

*<TommyInnit>: please don't tell me you ATE the wedding rings I spent A FUCKING MONTH on*

*<Ranboo>: I didnt say I did, I just said there was a possibility*

*<TommyInnit>: im going to kill you*

*<Ranboo>: that's fair*

*<Sapnap>: okay but can we please worry about how we don't have rings for the wedding??*

*<TommyInnit>: we have like 2 hrs theres no way I can make something in time*

*<Quackity>: just plain bands?*

*<TommyInnit>: that'd still take at least 5 hrs not enough time*

*<Quackity>: fuck*

*<Dream>: you could just take some twine and tie it around your fingers*

*<Dream>: good symbolic rings and u can replace them later*

*<Tubbo\_>: or you could use handcuffs*

*<Dream>: i'm sorry What*

*<Sapnap>: Dream's idea sounds good, does anyone have string*

*<Quackity>: I only have fishing line*

*<Sapnap>: that's fine*

*<Sapnap>: wait no i can't give you a ring made with your stuff*

*<Sapnap>: does anyone else have anything*

*<Tubbo\_>: handcuffs*

*<Dream>: just use what you ahve on you*

*<Dream>: .*

*<Dream>: tubbo-*

*<Sapnap>: dream i'm in a tuxedo*

*<Sapnap>: there is nothing in these pockets*

*<Sapnap>: wait nvm found a paperclip howd a paperclip get in here??*

*<Karl>: wha*

*<Karl>: whats going on?*

*<Dream>: backread*

*<Karl>: Oh*

*<Karl>: Oh No*

*<Karl>: gotta go find me some ring materials quick*

*<Tubbo\_>: i can help*

*<Karl>: thx! :D*

*<Karl>: wait*

*<Karl>: why does tubbo have handcuffs???*

*<Tubbo\_>: thats for me to know and u to nevver find out*

*<TommyInnit>: does anyone have visual on boob boy*

*<TommyInnit>: Im gonna hunt him down and cut the rings out of his stomach*

*<Ranboo>: please do not*

*<Tubbo\_>: we're bth outside kinoko rn*

*<TommyInnit>: omw*

*<Ranboo>: listen*

*<Ranboo>: the rings are mangled*

*<Ranboo>: I kinda chewed them up, yo uknow enderman teeth*

*<Ranboo>: so even if you get them out theyd be useless*

*<TommyInnit>: listening to your screams of agony will be worth it*

*<Tubbo\_>: hes headed towards karls library now*

*<Ranboo>: TUBBO WHY*

*<Tubbo\_>: <3*

*<Tubbo\_>: good luck bosman*

*<Tubbo\_>: u got this*

*<Ranboo>: i want a divorce*

*<Tubbo\_>: im taking the house and the kid*

*<Ranboo>: I-*

*<Ranboo>: you cant jushjkbnnnm;l*

*<Tubbo\_>: uh*

*<Dream>: I think tommy found him*

*<Tubbo\_>: oh so thats why i hear screamintg*

*<Tubbo\_>: does anyone kno if ranboo has life insurnace*

*<Dream>: I mean hes pretty rich isnt he? You can jsut take his money*

*<Tubbo\_>: wait ur right*

*<GeorgeNotFound>: who the fuck is screaming outside my window*

*<GeorgeNotFound>: I was having a nice nap*

*<Dream>: GOGY*

*<Dream>: SNAPNAP'S WEDDING IS IN 2 HRS*

*<GeorgeNotFound>: WHAT*

*<GeorgeNotFound>: WHYD DIN'T YOU WAKE ME UP*

*<Dream>: I FORGOT ABT YOU I'M SORRY*

*<Tubbo\_>: I mean thats fair sinc he sleeps through everything*

*<GeorgeNotFound>: i resent that*

*<Tubbo\_>: look me in hte eye and tell me im wrong*

*<GeorgeNotFound>: .*

*<GeorgeNotFound>: anyway*

*<Tubbo\_>: thats what I thouthgt*

*<GeorgeNotFound>: i found my tuxedo*

<GeorgeNotFound>: *where's the wedding happening again*

<Dream>: *Quack City*

<GeorgeNotFound>: *what*

<Dream>: *\*las nevas*

<GeorgeNotFound>: *oh*

<GeorgeNotFound>: *OH*

<GeorgeNotFound>: *omw*

<TommyInnit>: *mission accomplished*

<TommyInnit>: *bad news, rings are unsalavagble*

<TommyInnit>: *good news, tubbo is now rich*

<Tubbo\_>: *:D*

<Ranboo>: *i hate it here.*

### 103. remix, pt. 6 ([see previous parts of this loop here](#))

“No. No. Absolutely the fuck not.”

“Quackity--”

“You really expect me to believe that?” Quackity swept a hand in Dream’s direction. “Have you forgotten how many fucking times this bastard has lied to us? You really think *Tommy* would do that?”

“It-- you didn’t see how he was acting,” Tubbo whispered. “You didn’t talk to him on the beach. He was-- he was different.”

“He was-- *is your best friend*,” Quackity snapped. Couldn’t anyone see how irrational they were being? Trusting *Dream’s* words about Tommy, who he’d clearly had a vendetta against since the day the teenager joined the server? “You’ve known him for *years*, Tubbo--”

“People change,” Fundy murmured. “Like Wilbur did.”

Quackity let out a derisive laugh. “Fine. Fucking fine. So you’re all just gonna take *Dream’s* word for it, huh?”

“Tommy has his mask--”

“--he could given it to him to build his story--”

--he's injured--

--could be faking--

--the exile site--

--he probably burnt it down to frame Tommy before he ran--

--the court document--

--he could have planted it!" Quackity's hands curled and uncurled, itching for his axe. "At least *talk* to Tommy before you believe Dream! Why the fuck are you trusting him?!"

"It's in Tommy's handwriting," Fundy supplied. When Quackity rounded on him, he raised his hands. "The enchantment on the picture, I mean. I recognized it. It's in Tommy's handwriting."

"Which Dream could have *forged*."

"But it makes sense--"

"So? He could still be lying." Quackity raked his hands through his hair. "Look, just-- you can't just instantly believe whatever shit Dream says, okay? You know this. We know this."

Tubbo remained silent.

"Listen," Quackity sighed. "Taking Dream's mask as leverage, making him burn his stuff, threatening George and Sapnap-- does that really sound like something *Tommy* would do? Seriously, in what universe would he become a manipulative fucker like-- like-- Dream? Did you forget what Dream did? He tried to make you exile Tommy for *minor property damage*, Tubbo. He's a fucking psychopath, and he *hates Tommy*. You can't trust anything he says."

"You don't have to believe me," Dream said. "Quackity's right, I could be lying."

Quackity leveled a glare at him. What manipulative bullshit was the man trying to pull now?

"W-we, um." Ranboo shrunk back as attention turned towards him. "We sh-should probably talk to Tommy? Um, a-ask him what happened?"

Tubbo breathed out, shoulders drooping. "No, he's right. You're right. Tommy wouldn't do this."

Thank fuck, Tubbo was finally seeing reason. "Exactly!"

"But we could talk to him," Fundy added. He winced when Quackity turned a withering stare on him. "Just in case! You know, g-get his take on things--"

"Sounds great," Technoblade interrupted. "Now if you're all done. . ."

The *audacity* of this bastard. Quackity bristled. "Now wait one fucking second--"

“I told you everything,” Dream said. “I held up my end of the deal.”

“You did,” Tubbo agreed. “We’ll leave you alone.”

Quackity hesitated, glancing between Tubbo and Technoblade. “This isn’t over,” he snarled.

Technoblade straightened, eyes glinting. “Oh?”

The tension in the clearing skyrocketed. Tubbo sighed, grabbed Quackity’s arm and *pulled*. Quackity yelped, breaking eye contact with Technoblade and whipping around. “Tubbo--”

“Quackity,” Tubbo said. “Please.”

Quackity stared at the child president, taking in the weary slope of his shoulders and the exhaustion on his face. The kid had been through an emotional rollercoaster in the last hour - he was in no shape to fight. Dream had supposedly held up his end of the deal (though Quackity was pretty sure the story he’d fed them was complete bullshit); it would be pointless to stay here. They could afford to hold off on Butcher Army activities until they talked to Tommy.

“Fine,” he muttered. Tubbo visibly relaxed at his acquiescence.

Tossing one last glare at Dream and Technoblade, Quackity turned on his heel and stalked into the forest. Tubbo stumbled along beside him, and after a moment of hesitation, Fundy and Ranboo followed.

Quackity hoped they weren't making a huge mistake.

---

“So,” Technoblade said. “Are we gonna talk about that?”

“No.”

Technoblade sighed. “Dream.”

“Technoblade,” Dream mimicked. He turned away. “Let’s go, it’s getting cold out here.”

He couldn’t see Technoblade, but he could hear his footsteps crunching in the snow behind him. “Did Tommy really blackmail you?”

“I wouldn’t say *blackmail*.”

“He threatened to kill your friends if you didn’t play along.”

“They’re not my friends.”



Technoblade huffed. “But it worked.”

Dream shrugged, the movement stiff and uncomfortable. “Yeah, well, I didn’t want them to get hurt.”

There was a long moment of silence. Dream kept his gaze fixed on the house in the distance, steps quickening.

Technoblade matched his pace, coming up on his left. “So how much of that story was true?”

Dream side-eyed him. “Why do you want to know?”

“Curiosity, mostly.” Technoblade shrugged. “I worked with Tommy in Pogtopia. He was kinda weak. Didn’t seem the type to uh, use leverage.”

“People change.”

“Huh,” Technoblade grunted. “. . . are you okay?”

“Didn’t peg you to be an emotional type.”

“I’m not. Social interactions are like, my one weakness, you know this. Now stop tryin’ to change the subject.”

Dream snorted. “I’m fine. I got away.”

“And you’re not worried he’ll go after them?”

“Sapnap and George can take care of themselves,” Dream muttered. “I was too worked up to see it at the time, and I fell for it. I’m not going to make that mistake again.”

They had reached the house now. Dream sent Technoblade a sidelong glance as the piglin hybrid yanked the door open, trying to gauge his expression.

“Good,” the other said gruffly. He entered the house and made a beeline for the ladder, descending into the basement. Dream stared after him, bewildered.

Even after five hundred loops, he still couldn't understand Technoblade sometimes.

**104.**

Dream stared at Tommy.

Tommy narrowed his eyes. “Don’t you dare.”

“Pffft--”

“Dream--”

Dream burst into wheezing laughter, doubling over and clutching at his chest as his lungs attempted to expel every ounce of air. “Ch- *chickeninnit!*” he howled, slapping a hand on his leg. “You-- *chickeninnit!*”

Tommy snarled and attempted to whack him with his newly formed wing, only to miss and sweep two beakers and a potion stand off the table. “Stop laughing!”

“*Chicken--*” Dream choked out, trying to inhale. “How did you even--”

“I will murder you--”

“You can’t even hold a weapon because your arms turned into *wings--!*” Dream collapsed again, laughing hysterically. Tommy glared down at him, then drove his sneaker-clad foot into his ribs. Dream’s laughter gained a distinctly pained edge.

“I still have legs, bitch.”

Dream went silent for a moment. And then he just started laughing again, even harder than before.

“Just-- *imagine--*” he wheezed, “if-- if the potion turned your legs into-- *chicken legs instead--*”

“These aren’t even chicken wings!” Tommy shrieked, once again trying to whack Dream with his wings. He was marginally more successful, thought the blow had no force behind it and he ended up knocking several feathers askew. “They’re from a very respectable hawk, you bastard!”

“*Chickeninnit,*” Dream gasped, weakly pounding on the floor. “It’s *such a perfect nickname--*”

Tommy felt perfectly justified in stomping on his stomach.

## 105.

The obsidian walls around him were swaying, fading in and out of focus. He braced himself for the vertigo.

It hit him like a minecart, hurling him from his body. His senses fled. For a brief moment, he felt like he was floating, suspended in nothingness. And then something *yanked*, and he jerked backward and *around*, and then he was slamming back into his own body. Only now, he was somewhere different. *Somewhen* different.

Loop 118.

The first thing that hit him was the heat. It was worse than a summer heatwave, an oppressive, smothering *dryness* that could only mean the presence of lava. The second thing were the sounds-- ghosts screeching in the distance, the grunts of pigmen, and someone's rasping breaths.

Dream opened his eyes. He was standing on the netherrack bridge, one hand clamped on Tommy's shoulder as they stared into the lava below. Something was humming to his right, and Dream knew that if he turned, he'd see a portal. Which meant this was--

*("It's not your time to die, Tommy.")*

Dream jerked back like he'd been burned, stumbling a good distance away and raising his hands to show that he was unarmed. In the same moment, Tommy threw him off and whipped around, mouth half-open in a snarl. His gaze landed on Dream, and he took a step back - right over the edge.

For a moment, Tommy teetered, one arm outstretched. Dream lunged forward, reaching for it. His fingers grazed Tommy's--

--and closed around empty air.

Tommy screamed. Dream screamed with him, unthinkingly ripping a fire resistance potion from his inventory and hurling it down at Tommy. It hit the boy in the chest and didn't break, because *it wasn't a splash potion why didn't he throw a splash--* and Tommy was *in* the lava, and oh *Prime--*

Tommy stopped screaming.

Dream sank to his knees, staring at the lava even as he tried to process the events of the past five seconds. They'd woken up in the Nether. Tommy had fallen into lava. Tommy was dead.

He took a deep breath, curling his trembling hands into fists. Everything was okay. Any moment now, the loop would restart. It always did when one of them died. The loop would restart, and Tommy would be *fine*. He just had to wait a bit longer.

A minute ticked by. Then two. Dream remained kneeling on the netherrack. He could hear his heart beating in his ears. Sweat trickled down the back of his neck. His eyes were watering. He hadn't blinked in a while.

Five minutes passed. Ten. Fifteen. And *the loop did not restart*.

Someone was giggling, quiet and half-mad. Slowly, Dream sat back, legs tingling with pins and needles. He raised his gaze to the roof of the Nether, his vision wavy with heat haze and tears. The giggling had dissolved rapid, harsh breathing.

Why wasn't the loop restarting? Was this the last one? A timeline where Tommy had died in exile?

No. He refused. This wasn't happening. Tommy wasn't dead, Tommy *couldn't* be dead permanently because Dream still needed to fix things. The loop was going to restart, it was

going to be *fine*. If it didn't, he could just-- fuck, no, he couldn't even bring Tommy back because *his body was irretrievable and time hadn't restarted yet why wasn't it--?!*

---

*"What the fuck."*

"Tommy?" Dream muttered.

*"I . . ."* there was an uneasy pause. *"I think so? I-- fuck, I don't even know what--"*

He cut himself off with a noise of frustration. Dream slowly peeled his eyes open, squinting at the Nether roof.

"Did. . . time reset?" he croaked. "It wasn't-- It didn't-- nothing happened after you died."

Tommy leaned over him, face set in an unimpressed stare. His hair appeared to be dripping with lava, ectoplasmic droplets landing on netherrack and evaporating with a slight sizzling noise.

He was also slightly see-through. Dream blinked. "You're a ghost."

*"No shit,"* Tommy deadpanned. He shuffled back, clearly uncomfortable. *"I . . . think I have all my memories. I remember the loops."*

"Are you. . . still Tommy?"

*"I'm-- yeah. Not like-- not like Ghostbur."* He frowned. *"Maybe. It's-- maybe I forgot stuff, and forgot that I forgot. Fuck, that's messed up."*

"I can bring you back. If you'll let me," he added when Tommy stiffened. "If you want me to leave you alone, I'll leave."

*"I . . . no, bring me back."* Tommy's eyes narrowed. *"I don't know why the loop hasn't restarted yet, but-- I can't-- I can't stay dead. If I did split from some other Tommy who's trapped in Limbo, he needs to get out."*

"Okay. Yeah. I'll just." Dream winced. "I need to be touching you to bring you back."

Tommy scowled and reluctantly held out a hand. Dream gingerly took it, fighting back the urge to recoil at the unnatural heat emanating from the ghost's skin. He closed his eyes and focused.

Instinctive panic rose up and he ruthlessly shoved it down. Quackity wasn't here. Quackity wasn't going to hurt him. He was going to revive Tommy. Quackity wouldn't see the process. *Everything was going to be okay.*

Gritting his teeth, Dream began to chant. Heavy syllables fell from his mouth, shaky but growing steadily stronger. His eyes snapped open, glowing, as the words came faster, his voice rising. Strings, visible only to him, materialized. Tommy shivered as they wrapped around his ghostly body and rubbed his neck, presumably in an attempt to remove the string he could feel wrapped around it. His fingers passed right through.

Reaching the end of his chant, Dream grabbed a fistful of the strings and *pulled*. Tommy dissolved, wisps of ectoplasm whisking away to presumably rejoin its body. Dream let out a shaky breath, rubbing his right hand.

Tommy would be respawning in Logstedshire. He should get up and check to make sure that the revival worked properly.

. . . and he would. In a few minutes. Once the unpleasant roil of emotions behind his ribs calmed a bit.

Dream laid his forehead against his knees and tried not to think about the implications of what had just happened.

---

Tommy was fine. This was *fine*. He was just. Confused.

So loops didn't just end when they died. Tommy had always assumed that the loops where he didn't die ended because Dream kicked the bucket, but *apparently* that wasn't the case.

When he'd died, he hadn't gone to Limbo. Oh, he'd definitely been on the way there - he had a vague recollection of hurtling into inky darkness, only for golden strings to wrap around him and yank him back. Everything had gone black, then white, and then he was rising from the lava.

Tommy took a shaky breath, mind whirling. He only had one set of memories. There was no distinction whatsoever between himself and his ghost. Was it possible that the loops were interfering with the death process? Maybe it had kept him from going to Limbo, kept his soul whole instead of splitting it between Limbo and a ghost. But in that case, why did Ghostbur still appear in the loops? Did the get-out-of-Limbo-free card only apply to loopers?

Too many questions and not enough answers. One thing was certain, though: there were no more repercussions to dying.

He. . . wasn't sure how he felt about that.

Tommy swung his legs over the edge of the bed, only to pause when white flashed in his vision. Reaching up, he picked the lock of hair out of his eyes. His lips pulled back into a sneer and he tucked it away, brushing blonde strands over it.

Okay, so there were *some* repercussions to dying. Mental note to self: find scissors ASAP.

He pushed himself to his feet, ignoring the dull ache that flooded his body. Respawning from complete vaporization was a shit experience, but after a hundred-odd loops, it just didn't hurt as bad as it used to. Plus, he needed to leave before Dream got there. The bastard could claim he'd changed, but if he started asking questions like he had after the first revival--

*("So, what was it like?")*

Tommy shoved the memories into a chest, locked it with a key, and tossed both into the deepest, darkest recesses of his skull. Dream could come through the portal any second now, and he needed to be gone by then.

Mind made up, he turned inland and began the long trek to Technoblade's home.

*(pls take this 2-minute survey if you have time: <https://forms.gle/kRvFQcKPKACy87Ck7>)*

## Chapter End Notes

Guys guys gUYS Falling\_Moonlilies caught the little detail I added to Dream's rambling last chapter and turned it into [fanart](#) and IT'S SO COOL  
Also new inspired fic, it's a preface to a bedrock bros timeloop series - go check it out!

### **Loop Notes**

**101.** Alone, they are menaces. Together, they are unstoppable menaces.

**102.** The ceremony went off without a hitch. Each newlywed proudly sported their rings, made of fishing line, mangled paperclips, and flowers. Tubbo was disappointed that Karl turned down his handcuffs suggestion, but he admitted that the flower rings looked pretty nice.

**104.** Tommy hasn't quite mastered hybrid potions yet. . .

# Chapter 22

## Chapter Summary

the last two parts of this chapter are pretty much angst  
ALSO LONG BEGINNING NOTE ADDRESSING SOME COMMENTS IN THE  
SURVEY, IF YOU DON'T CARE JUST SKIP TO THE LOOP NOTES

## Chapter Notes

1. Thank you all for your taking the survey and your kind comments :D I appreciate you all for being willing to leave a comment, and don't force yourself to comment if it makes you uncomfortable, I appreciate y'all for just being here <3
2. On concerns about this fic becoming angst-heavy: This fic is going to have a bittersweet ending, leaning towards the sweet side. I'm gonna keep writing crack, but there are going to be plot-heavy chapters in the future. Sometimes, things will get dark. If I do post a chapter that's completely crack-free, I'll add a warning in the summary so you guys can skip those chapters. Otherwise, if you don't want to see angst/plot, I'd suggest not reading the last part of each chapter - as you've all noticed, I tend to put plot loops last.
3. About my upload schedule: It's nonexistent. I try to update about every 13-20 days, but that can be kinda unstable sometimes ahaha
4. About putting the loops in chronological order: I'm planning to do that after I finish this fic.
5. Yup I'll add trigger warnings in the beginning notes.

### Spotlighted Comments

**nyanbinary\_87:** "people change," fundy murmured, "like the tides in the ocean"  
**mentallypapaya:** YOU. SAID. CRACK.

**TW: Implied/referenced self-harming in 109. Implied/referenced torture, abuse, and murder in 110.**

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

### **106.** *(credit to shift\_0)*

Technoblade checked the Vault blueprints for the third time, then dug his pick into the wall. The stone gave way under the netherite, falling apart in neat chunks. He brushed past them without picking them up - his inventory was full enough as it was, and he had no use for them.

He raised his pick for the next swing, only to pause. The voices in his head had quieted to an uneasy murmur.

“Chat?” he asked aloud.

*What's that sound? Listen. Listen! Oooo mystery sound? I like mysteries! Listen. This gives me the creeps, hurry up. How much you wanna bet that's Sam coming to fight us? HA WE'LL KICK HIS GREEN BOY ASS. Isn't Dream the green boy? Shhh focus. Listen.*

Technoblade strained his ears. Indeed, the noise of grinding rock could be heard, faint but growing steadily louder. Someone else was mining, and they were headed straight for him.

Technoblade drew his sword, thoughts racing. Was it a coincidence? Or had someone found out about their plan?

The wall broke open. Technoblade froze, sword forgotten, as Tommy stumbled into the tunnel. He did a double take when his pick met air, then glanced around. His gaze swept across the walls and landed on Technoblade.

Technoblade stared at Tommy. Tommy stared at Technoblade.

Slowly, the teenager raised his free hand in greeting. “. . . Ayup.”

And then he ambled across the tunnel, drilled a few feet into the rock, then stepped in and turned back around. He maintained eye contact as he set down blocks, cutting himself off from the rest of the tunnel and disappearing from view. Technoblade was left staring at the wall.

“. . . What just happened?"

### **107. toddler tales, pt. 7 ([see previous parts of this loop here](#))**

Sam had been staring at them for the last five minutes.

Tommy aggressively chomped on a spoonful of cereal and glared right back. Dream, sitting next to him, continued to inhale his pancakes. Sam blinked, realized he'd been staring, and hastily looked down at his plate.

He had barely touched his breakfast. Puffy kept nudging him, trying to start up a conversation, but her attempts always fell flat. The two children were too busy eating to respond, and Sam just gave stilted, monosyllabic answers.

Tommy dug his spoon into his cereal and took another bite. An odd tingling feeling spread through his legs. He shifted in his seat, swinging his feet in an attempt to wake them up, only to accidentally kick Dream in the ankle. The other child choked on his pancakes, prompting a look of alarm from the two adults. Dream managed to pacify them between coughs, then washed the pancakes down with his apple juice. When he'd reasonably recovered, he kicked



Tommy in the leg. Tommy tried to retaliate, but Dream shifted so he was out of reach. Scowling, Tommy took another bite of his cereal.

His body *burned*.

He yelped, falling out of his chair. Sam and Puffy shot to their feet, alarm clear on their faces. Tommy tried to tell them he was fine, but it came out as a strangled scream.

It *hurt*. He could hear something snapping, accompanied with starbursts of pain that made his vision white out for a moment. He threw his head back, cracking it against the floor in a desperate attempt to knock himself out.

All at once, the pain disappeared, leaving Tommy shuddering on the floor. He groaned, wincing as his raw throat protested. Everything ached.

“Tommy?” Oh hey, it was Dream. “A-are you okay?”

Tommy closed his eyes and didn’t reply. Cloth rustled above him.

“Did he pass out?” Sam’s voice was strained. A hand slid under his head, and Tommy moaned in protest as his skull began throbbing.

“Shh,” Puffy murmured. “Just moving you to the couch.”

Someone lifted him up, and then the world faded to black.

---

Tommy blinked awake to the sight of Puffy’s ceiling.

“You’re awake!” Tommy raised his head to see Dream, who was bouncing up and down on the other end of the couch. “You’ve been out for two hours. Puffy and Sam’re in the kitchen.”

“I feel like shit,” Tommy croaked. “What the fuck happened?”

“You passed out.”

"Thanks, Sherlock. *Why* did I pass out?"

Dream remained silent. Tommy sat up, grimacing as his muscles protested. His clothes felt. . . different, now. Tight, when they’d been hanging off of him before.

Wait.

He squinted down at himself, then raised a hand. The pudgy fingers had elongated and become a bit thinner.

“What the fuck,” he said flatly. Then, louder, “What the *fuck*. ”

He'd grown. He was growing. Granted, it was at a very abnormal rate, but he was *growing*.

". . . Yeah. That's why."

Tommy turned to Dream. Dream, who still looked like a toddler. "You didn't grow."

Dream made a show of looking down at himself, then back at Tommy. "Nope," he chirped. "I think it's because you had milk in your cereal."

". . . Milk," Tommy deadpanned. "Are you fucking serious."

Dream dropped the childish act to grimace. “Yeah, it was pretty dumb of us not to think of that.”

In any other situation, it would have been hilarious. As it was, Tommy was mentally berating himself for not trying milk to fix whatever mess he'd made with his potions. It was *so fucking simple*.

“ . . . Tommy?”

“Tommy. Yes. That’s me.” Tommy stared down at his hands. His body appeared to be around five or six years old now. “What the fuck?”

“You fell out of your chair and started screaming,” Dream supplied unhelpfully. “It was very dramatic.”

Tommy groaned, burying his face in his hands. “Why did we never think of milk?”

“To be fair, none of the normal potions physically change people. I guess we assumed that milk only worked for particle effects.”

"But *milk*?! Why didn't we think of that?!"

"Shh!" Dream yelped, but it was already too late. Rapid footsteps heralded Puffy and Sam’s arrival.

“Tommy! You’re awake!”

“Hi,” Tommy greeted, mind half on the conversation. The other half was still on *why the fuck didn’t we think about milk*? “Yes. I’m awake. And bigger. This is bullshit.”

Sam and Puffy blinked at him. Tommy realized too late that he wasn’t acting very child-like.

“Shit, I mean-- *fuck*--”

“Fuck!” Dream repeated happily, like the bastard he was. Sam made a strangled noise while Puffy tried to cobble her composure back together. With limited success, of course, but Tommy gave her points for an attempt.

“Tommy, do you-- what do you remember?”

“You’re Puffy. Uh, and Sam.” Tommy scrunched his nose, hastily donning his ‘I am a harmless small child’ act. “But Wilby was there too, and his dad, and-- and I didn’t remember you when I was there. I think. How did I get home? Why am I back?”

The two adults exchanged glances “Wilby?” Puffy asked.

“Wilbur. My brother.” Tommy scowled. “I remember you an’ Dream, but I remember Wilby at the same time-- what the fuck is happening to me?!”

“Two sets of memories,” Sam realized. “He-- you have two sets of memories. You’re growing again, and you’re getting your memories back.”

“But why is Dream still small?! Why did I get bigger?!”

Both adults looked at Dream, who was watching them with wide, curious eyes. “Um,” Sam started, and didn’t say anything else.

“We. . . don’t know yet,” Puffy admitted. When Tommy’s face twisted into what looked like the beginnings of a temper tantrum, she rushed to placate him. “But we’ll figure it out! You said your-- er, kidnapper-- told you you were turned into kids, right? Maybe they know something! Do you know their name?”

“Dunno,” Tommy grumbled. “Had pink hair, though.”

Puffy blinked. “Did she have blue eyes?”

Tommy sent her a weird look. “No? They were red. Kinda cool, actually.”

“He said we couldn’t see our friends,” Dream mumbled. “But he did take us to see Wilbur’s dad.”

“Wilbur’s dad,” Puffy repeated. Her eyes widened. “Philza? Wait, so the ‘kidnapper’--”

Sam made a noise that was something between a laugh and a groan. “. . . Technoblade.”

---

Three miles away, in the heart of L’Manberg, Technoblade felt a sudden sense of *foreboding*. “Hurry,” he called.

“Trying,” Philza snapped back, sawing at his ankle monitor with renewed aggression. “This fuckin’-- *plastic*--”

The band snapped under the blade of the dagger. Philza wasted no time tossing it away, shoving his foot back into his boot without bothering to put his sock back on. Technoblade

handed him a sack and a splash potion of invisibility. Philza tossed the bag into his inventory, then turned to Technoblade.

“We have sixteen minutes. You ready?”

Technoblade huffed. “Let’s get outta here.”

By the time Quackity arrived, they were long gone.

**108.**

“*DREAM!*”

Dream turned around. “Oh hey, Tommy.”

“Don’t ‘hey’ me,” Tommy fumed, stomping up to him and jabbing a finger into his chest. “What the *fuck* did you do to Sam Nook?!”

“Nothing! I just. . . tweaked Sam’s design a bit.”

“YOU TURNED HIM INTO A FUCKIN’ RACCOON!”

“Sam was in charge of his combat systems and coding - he’s still a very capable android--”

“HE’S *TINY!*”

“And adorable,” Dream confirmed. Tommy’s eye twitched.

*TOMMYINNIT?* Both men jumped at the high-pitched voice, whipping around to see Sam Nook scampering up to them. *IS EVERYTHING ALRIGHT? IS DREAM BOTHERING YOU?*

Tommy’s scowl deepened. “Yeah, he’s *bothering* me alright.”

Sam Nook’s expression wasn’t visible behind his creeper mask, but he radiated disapproval. *DREAM, WHY ARE YOU BOTHERING TOMMYINNIT?*

“S-sorry,” Dream choked out, fighting down laughter at the sight of the robot. Nook came up to Tommy’s knee and resembled an animal crossing character dressed in a construction outfit and a creeper mask. “He’s just-- really fun to annoy.”

“I,” Tommy said, “am going to carve out your intestines with a rusty spork.”

Dream lost his fight with laughter. Tommy eyed him with a look not dissimilar to how one would eye roadkill, then turned to Sam Nook.

“Hey Nook.”

*YES, TOMMYINNIT?*

“Can you make Dream leave?”

*OF COURSE, TOMMYINNIT. DREAM, I MUST ASK YOU TO LEAVE THE PREMISES.*

Dream continued to die of laughter. Tommy narrowed his eyes. “I think you’re gonna have to use force.”

*PERHAPS. DREAM, PLEASE LEAVE. THIS IS YOUR FINAL WARNING.*

“Oh *Prime*,” Dream choked out. “He’s so *tiny* and *adorable*--”

Nook marched up to Dream, whacked the back of his knees to make him fall over, then dragged him off hotel premises by the back of his hoodie. The entire takedown took less than six seconds.

“Holy shit,” Tommy said aloud.

By now, Nook had reached the gate in the hotel fence. He politely pushed it open, then not-so-politely punted Dream through it. Dream staggered to his feet and turned around, only to be forced back by a kick in the ankle. As the man opened his mouth to protest, Nook slammed the gate shut and pulled a trident thrice his height from his inventory. Dream wisely retreated.

*“Holy shit.”*

### **109.** *(credit to Strategy)*

Tommy lifted the bottle up to the lamp, squinting. A couple of swirls showed that the ingredients had fully dissolved - no suspicious chunks. That was a good sign. The liquid was slightly darker and more viscous than a normal Potion of Healing, but then again, it *wasn't* a normal Potion of Healing.

Tommy raised the iron sword Technoblade had gifted (read: that Tommy had stolen from) him and sliced his palm open, careful to keep his hand over the towel he’d laid on the table. Wouldn’t want blood to get into Technoblade’s hardwood floors - he’d ask questions.

With his uninjured hand, he uncorked the bottle. A normal Healing would close the shallow cut in about seven seconds; Healing II would close it in five. Tommy was trying out a new mix of Regeneration and Healing II that would hopefully bring it down to three. He took a sniff, grimacing at the sickly sweet smell. It had metallic undertones - not a good sign.

Well, if worse came to worst, Dream could just revive him. Tommy raised the bottle to his lips and began chugging.

The door slammed open. Tommy choked on the potion and shoved the remaining bit into his inventory, not bothering to cork it. Why the fuck was Technoblade back already? He should’ve been gone for at least another two hours--

Shit. It was *Thursday*, not Friday. Technoblade came back earlier on Thursdays, and now Tommy was standing *literally* red-handed in the middle of his living room. He was so screwed.

“I’m b-- *Tommy!*”

“Ayup,” Tommy said through a mouthful of potion. Or tried to say. The potion went down the wrong pipe, and Tommy found himself coughing. *Hard*. Technoblade dropped the string of dead rabbits he was holding and rushed forward, grabbing Tommy by the shoulders. The teenager tried to shove him away, but he held tight.

“What did you drink?” he demanded. Shit, he’d seen the potion. “What did you *do*?”

Tommy was too busy hacking up a lung to provide a coherent answer. Technoblade released him with a snarl, whipping around and lunging for one of his chests. He came up with a bottle of milk and shoved it in Tommy’s face. “*Drink,* ” he ordered.

Tommy would, except it was *kinda hard to drink stuff when he was choking*. He batted Technoblade’s hand away. The piglin hybrid dropped the milk, spent a second staring at it in dismay, then whirled around and yanked a glass bottle from another chest. He smashed it open against the floor.

Magenta smoke wafted up around them. Tommy blinked, feeling his skin tingle as the cut on his palm stitched itself shut. Why the fuck did Technoblade throw a potion of Regeneration at him?

Tossing questions aside for the moment, he thumped his bloodied hand against his chest and forced his breathing to slow down. He coughed a few more times before he brought it under control. Technoblade watched him like a hawk.

When his epiglottis had upgraded from “imminent death” to “extreme discomfort”, he wiped his mouth with the back of his wrist and leveled a glare at Technoblade. “Haven’t you heard of knocking?”

He sounded like he’d swallowed a bucket of gravel. Tommy winced.

Technoblade’s expression darkened. Strangely enough, it wasn’t angry - no, his eyes were too wide, and there was something almost like *fear* lining the set of his brows. Rather than rise to Tommy’s bait, he crossed his arms. “Tommy, what were you doing?”

“Drinking a potion,” Tommy huffed. “Seriously, man, you can’t just barge in like that--”

“Stop tryin’ to change the subject. What potion?”

Ah shit, he was serious. “. . . Healing.”

Technoblade narrowed his eyes. “You were coughin’ up blood.”

“I . . . wasn’t?” Oh shit, did Technoblade think he was trying to poison himself? “That was the potion-- here, see? It’s not blood, I just choked when you surprised me. Which is *why* --”

“Healing doesn’t have that color. *Or* consistency. Try again.”

Tommy rolled his eyes. “It was a new variation. I was testing it out.”

Technoblade’s gaze flicked to his bloodied hand. “On yourself.”

“Yeah? What else was I supposed to do?”

“Test it on animals.”

“Why the fuck would I do that? The potions aren’t for animals, they’re for humans.”

Technoblade stared at him. Tommy stared back, defiant.

“Tommy,” Technoblade started slowly. “You could have hurt yourself. You *did* hurt yourself. You don’t know what the potion was going to do. You could have *died*.”

Right. From Technoblade’s perspective, there were permanent consequences.

“I’d be fine,” he deadpanned.

Technoblade’s mouth twisted with frustration. “This isn’t the time for your hubris--”

“It’s not hubris! I would have been fine! I know what I’m doing!”

“It’s *basic self-preservation*--”

“What, don’t want your ally to die before you can destroy L’Manberg?”

“No, I don’t want you to die because *I care about you!*”

Tommy stared at him. Technoblade took a deep breath and drew back, raking a hand through his hair.

“I care about you,” he repeated. “Tommy, I don’t know what happened to you on that beach, but-- you can’t-- don’t throw everything away because you wanted to-- wanted to test a potion.”

Tommy wanted to laugh. “What the fuck is wrong with you?” he bit out. “What-- why the fuck are you acting like you care?”

Technoblade frowned. “I do care--”

“*No you fucking don’t*,” Tommy snarled. Ha. Technoblade, caring about him? Yeah, betraying him and *razing his country to bedrock* was a *great* way to show it.

“Tommy--”

“*Tommy*,” Tommy mocked in a high-pitched voice that sounded nothing like Technoblade. “*I care about you so much, please don’t accidentally kill yourself before we can carry out our mutual goals, mimimi*--”

“Tommy!”

Tommy’s jaw snapped shut with a click. Technoblade’s hands curled and uncurled, blackened nails carving crescent moons into his palms.

The piglin hybrid took a deep breath. “Just-- don’t,” he ground out. “Don’t use my potion stands anymore.”

“I’ll do what I like, bitch--”

Technoblade spoke over him. “There’s enough in the chests, if you want some, just take one. But *stay away* from the stands.”

Tommy’s lips curled into a sneer. Looks like he’d have to make his own stands again, which was annoying - Technoblade’s were always better crafted and lasted longer. But he knew when to pick his fights. He wasn’t gonna win this one - in fact, Technoblade would probably hide the potion stands so Tommy couldn’t brew things. Being stubborn wouldn’t get him anywhere.

“Fine,” he grumbled. “No more brewing shit, but don’t blame me when you run out of potions.”

Technoblade sent him an unreadable look, then turned away with a sharp nod. Tommy flipped him off and headed for the ladder. He still had two samples in his inventory - Technoblade wouldn’t check on him until dinner, which was enough time for him to test them out.

Hopefully, they wouldn’t make him sick.

## 110.

Tommy leaned back, sighing. The sweet notes of Cat floated through the air around him. He tapped his fingers on the bench as he stared into the distance,

His chest felt funny. Maybe it was nostalgia. Tubbo wasn’t here, just Tommy and the disc. If he closed his eyes, he could almost pretend everything was back to normal. The normal before Schlatt, and Dream, and the loops.

Someone sat down next to him. “Hey, Tommy.”

The illusion shattered. “*Big Q*,” Tommy greeted, reluctantly opening his eyes. “*Hi*.”

Quackity leaned back in his seat, staring at him in a way that meant he wanted to say something. Tommy rolled his eyes.

“*Okay, spit it out. Why the fuck are you here?*”

“What, I can’t talk to my favorite ghost?”



*"You're a busy man, big Q," Tommy deadpanned. "The only reason you'd come here is to find me, and you'd only find me if you wanted something. So what is it?"*

Quackity sighed. "That obvious, huh?"

Tommy waited for him to continue. He didn't. ". . . So?"

Quackity grimaced and turned away, staring at the horizon. "It's. . . I'm not sure how to say it--"

*"Just say it," Tommy groaned. "I'm not fuckin' fragile, I don't need sugarcoating."*

"Right, right." Quackity took a deep breath. "Tommy, do you want to be alive again?"

Tommy stared at him. His death this time around had been an honest accident - he'd frozen when he'd seen a creeper. The explosion had sent him into a panic attack, which (when compounded with how he'd fallen and impaled himself on his shattered armor) was pretty much fatal. He just couldn't be bothered to drag himself to see Dream after that fiasco.

Being a ghost wasn't too bad anyway - he could go through walls and shit, and jumpscare Ranboo. (Though the poor guy had started crying the third time he did it, so Tommy stopped.)

Now Quackity was asking if he wanted to be revived.

He shrugged, turning towards the view. *"I dunno, big Q. It's peaceful. No more worrying."*

Quackity's breathing hitched slightly before it evened out again. "Huh," he said. "Not boring?"

*"Maybe a little," Tommy admitted. "But it's better than fighting all the time."*

Quackity shifted uncomfortably, then huffed. ". . . How's Tubbo holding up?"

*"He's sad," Tommy said. "But he'll be okay."*

Another long silence. Quackity clasped his hands together and sat forward, foot tapping.

". . . Are you sure you don't want to be revived?"

Tommy shrugged. *"I mean, I don't really care."* He peered at Quackity. *"Why're you asking?"*

"I might be able to revive you."

*"I thought Dream was the only one."*

Something dark flashed across Quackity's face. "He is, but I can convince him to revive you."

Tommy stared at Quackity. Quackity didn't meet his gaze.

*“Why do you want me to come back so bad?”*

Quackity shrugged. “I . . . just do.”

Tommy knew a nonanswer when he heard it. But. . . he trusted Quackity. He was one of the few who had still cared about Tommy up until the end. There was probably a good reason for why the man was being so dodgy.

Being a ghost was getting kinda boring, anyway. And with Quackity there, he didn’t need to worry about struggling through another painful conversation with Dream. So. . . *“Okay.”*

Quackity beamed. “Cool, cool. Let’s head to the prison, then. Don’t worry about Dream, he won’t try anything with me there.”

He rose from the bench and held out a hand. Without hesitation, Tommy took it.

---

Something was wrong.

Sam had let them into the prison without question. He skipped the security checks and took them straight through the guards’ corridor, which-- wasn’t like him at all. The Warden took his job seriously; he made everyone go through the checks, even those that seemed harmless. And neither Quackity nor Tommy seemed harmless.

Tommy narrowed his eyes at the Warden’s back, only to don a neutral expression when Sam’s gaze flicked his way. The creeper hybrid had been doing that a lot. Probably upset that Tommy died.

Maybe that was why he was rushing the security checks. But even if he was eager to get Tommy revived, he wouldn’t rush the process. Sam prioritized being a warden above all else-- he’d proved that when he let Tommy die.

Something was happening here. Something Tommy didn’t know about. He didn’t like that.

As they stepped onto the platform, Quackity pulled out a pair of shears. Odd weapon choice, but Sam didn’t seem too put off by it, so Tommy didn’t comment. Then they were moving, and Tommy was too busy fighting off panic to care about anything else.

It was a shitty trauma response, something that happened whenever he was standing on this platform. He had to remind himself that it was fine. He’d visited here as a ghost before. It would be the same as always. In and out, and then he’d be alive again. He was going to be okay. Quackity was here to protect him. Tommy was already dead. Dream couldn’t hurt him.

He took a deep breath, his incorporeal lungs burning with the heat. Quackity sent him a side glance, then looked away when the platform reached the other side.

The smell hit him first. Tommy recoiled at the familiar, sickening-sweet scent of blood mixed with potions of regeneration. His eyes darted wildly, searching for the source, only to land on several suspicious splatters covering the walls and floor. Most of it was faded; the porous obsidian absorbed any sort of fluid.

Dream was huddled in the back corner of the cell, squished between the lectern and the wall. He didn't move as Quackity and Tommy stepped off the platform.

"Hello, Dream."

Dream raised his head, exhaustion clear in every line of his face. He opened his mouth to speak, only to freeze when he noticed Tommy. Tommy flinched and shuffled backwards.

Quackity stepped between them. "This isn't a usual visit. We've got a guest today, so I'll make it quick--" he pointed at Tommy. "Revive him."

Dream's mouth opened and closed. His gaze darted wildly between the ghost and the man. "I-I can't," he croaked. "Not with-- not with you here."

Tommy couldn't see Quackity's expression. He *did* see, however, the way Quackity adjusted his grip on the shears.

Dream's skin paled to paper-white. "I can't," he protested.

"I wasn't asking, Dream," Quackity said softly. He took a step forward. Dream shrank back.

Something was very, *very* wrong here. Every alarm bell was going off in Tommy's head. Unbidden, snippets of a past conversation rose in his mind.

*("What do you call the shit that happened in prison then?")*

"Revive him," Quackity repeated.

"I *can* 't, please, you'll know, you'll *hear*--"

"You're not the one in charge, Dream," Quackity snarled. He stalked forward and grabbed Dream by the front of his jumpsuit, hoisting him to his feet. "Didn't you want to do this? Keep the only 'interesting' person on the server alive? You did it before. Do it again, or I'll kill you."

"You'll kill me anyway," Dream choked out. "You'll figure out how to revive people and then--"

Quackity's face went terrifyingly blank. "Fine then," he said. "Revive Tommy, or you'll *wish* I killed you."

Tommy stared at them. Stared at the resigned terror on Dream's face, his shaking hands, the way he curled away from Quackity as though he expected--

Like puzzle pieces clicking together, everything fell into place.

The blood seeping into the walls.

The blood splattered on Dream's jumpsuit.

The blood drying on Quackity's shears.

And most damningly, the nauseating smell of Regeneration.

*("What do you call the shit that happened in prison then?"*

*"If I recall correctly, you weren't the one that got beaten to death."*

*". . . That's not what I was talking about.")*

Fuck. *Fuck. Fuck shit shit shit--*

*"B-big Q?"*

Quackity blinked, like he'd forgotten Tommy was there. A smile slid onto his face. It didn't reach his eyes. "Don't worry, Tommy. You'll be alive again in no time."

Dream made a noise high in the back of his throat, wild and half-hysterical. "Fine," he breathed, slumping forward. Something almost like *surprise* flashed across Quackity's face. "Fine. Whatever. It doesn't matter. T-Tommy, you-- come here."

Tommy remained rooted in place.

"Come here," Quackity said. Tommy's eyes strayed to his free hand, which was clamped around Dream's shoulder. "Come on, Tommy. Don't you want to be alive again?"

*"Big Q. Quackity,"* Tommy rasped. His voice shook. *"What. . ."*

"Dream was just being stubborn, that's all." Quackity's voice hardened. "Now *come here.*"

Tommy's drifted forward, mind still reeling. Dream held out a hand when he neared, only to flinch.

"I need to be touching him," he said.

"Don't try anything funny," Quackity warned. Dream nodded, shifting his hand a bit closer to Tommy. An invitation.

Tommy stared at it. *"I don't. . . I'm not sure about this."*

"Come on," Quackity coaxed. His eyes were fixed on Tommy. "Take his hand."

Tommy's hand moved on autopilot, dropping into Dream's. The man let out a shaky breath, eyes sliding shut. He began to chant, monotone syllables dropping from cracked lips. Tommy inhaled at the familiar sensation of *strings* wrapping around him.

Dream's voice rose. The strings *pulled*.

The last thing Tommy saw was Quackity's smile.

---

Tommy shot up, gasping. He slammed a fist into his chest as his lungs and heart began functioning again. Fuck, he hated this part of the revival process.

He waited until his shivering died down, getting used to the feeling of blood in his veins. A quick glance around revealed that he was in his house, the last place he'd set his spawn before he died.

There was nobody else around him. He was alone. Tommy let himself curl into a ball, fisting his trembling hands in his hair.

Okay. Shit. *Shit*. Think, but not all at once. What had Puffy said? Right, create a list. Creating a list would help him process things better. He started with the small things, like Puffy had taught him to.

One: he was alive. His body was in working order, as always, but he'd have to get used to being corporeal again.

Two: Dream had revived him, again. Except this time, Quackity had been the one to initiate it.

Three: Quackity was looking for information on the revival process. Information that only *Dream* had, information that Dream refused to share.

Four: Quackity was using him. Had used him. Had used his fucking *ghost* so he could get his hands on the revival process.

Five: It had been nearly a month since Tommy had died. Using his ghost had been Quackity's last resort.

Six: Quackity's first resort was torturing Dream for the revival book.

Seven: Dream had been in prison for nearly two and half years by now. Had Quackity been--visiting him the entire time?

Eight: (*"This isn't a usual visit."*)

Yes, he had been visiting him the entire time.

Nine: neither he nor Dream had done anything drastic this time around, which meant that this had happened in Loop Zero too.

Ten: He *remembered* things. Things that suddenly had a second meaning.

Technoblade astride a horse at full gallop, racing away from the prison, an unconscious Dream slumped in his arms. Punz betraying them in the final fight, going straight for Quackity's back.

Dream, frantic and trying not to blurt out the secrets of resurrection. Quackity, his eyes shining with hunger when he looked at Tommy's ghost.

His mind was a whirlpool of confusion and horror. Quackity was after the revival book. Quackity used Tommy so he could see the revival process. Quackity tortured Dream. Sam had been helping Quackity--

He recoiled at the thought. But no, it made sense-- why else would the security checks go by so quickly? There were cameras in the cell, Sam *had* to know what had been happening. Dream had been suffering and nobody else had known in the original timeline, because Sam locked down the prison after Tommy left and *nobody could visit*. Nobody except Quackity. And every time they looped back--

*--and every time they looped back--*

Tommy scrambled off of his bed and collapsed on all fours, dry heaving. He could taste copper and ghost tears in the back of his throat.

Fuck this. Fuck this. *Fuck this*. Dream hurt him. Dream deserved it. Dream *deserved--*

*(--clawing at obsidian walls, hands batted aside so easily, screaming, screaming, somebody please help me save me get me out away from this madman please stop please I don't want to die--)*

Tommy pressed his forehead against the dirt floor. He could remember it, clear as day. Dream looming over him with bloodied fists and jagged grin, the lava behind him casting him in burning red.

*(--human bodies, so fragile, skulls cracking and caving beneath knuckles--)*

It was all too easy to imagine Quackity in his place. Only instead of bloodied fists, bloodied *shears--*

*(--sharp metal cutting into flesh and bone, carving-- )*

Tommy snarled, hunching over. He didn't want to think about it. Didn't *need* to think about it. Dream hurt him, got hurt in return-- it was karma. Simple. Easy. Dream deserved it for what he did.

*(--fragile joints shattered like glass--)*

Dream deserved it. He *did*--

( “Revive Tommy, or you’ll *wish* I killed you.” )

“SHUT UP!” Tommy howled, slamming a fist into the ground. “JUST FUCKING SHUT UP! STOP IT! STOP IT! HE HURT ME! HE KILLED ME! HE DESTROYED MY HOME! HE’S AN ABSOLUTE BASTARD AND HE DES--”

He choked on the word.

Because Dream didn’t deserve it. *Nobody* deserved it. He knew firsthand the terror of being trapped, unable to escape from the pain, knowing there was someone *out there* who *knew* what was happening yet chose not to help.

Dream had abused Tommy. Dream had been tortured. And then he’d suffered the same thing, over, and over, and over.

What was Tommy supposed to feel?

A hoarse, mirthless laugh tore its way out of his chest. Once he started, he couldn’t stop. He kept laughing, and laughing, even as his eyes burned.

They were over a hundred and fifty loops in. How many times had Dream looped into the prison? How many times had Dream woken up with Quackity standing over him? How *long* had Dream spent bleeding and bleeding and--

“Tommy?”

Ranboo was standing in the doorway. A bundle of alliums lay at his feet. The sun was at his back, casting his face in deep shadow, but Tommy could hear the sizzling of water against skin.

Tommy tried to speak, but another cackle threatened to burst from his chest. He bit down on his tongue until he tasted iron.

“Tommy,” Ranboo gasped, and when Tommy blinked, he was *there*, a foot away, hands reaching out and hovering like he was scared to touch him. “Tommy, you’re-- *you’re alive.*”

That’s right. He was alive. Again. Everything ached. His skin felt too tight, too stiff. His chest was a mess of confusion and vindication and guilt. His head was too loud. He was being torn to pieces. He needed--he needed something, someone, anything--

Tommy reached out and grabbed Ranboo, pulling him down to his level, hands curling in the lapels of his suit. Ranboo yelped, but Tommy was already falling forward, pressing his face into the fabric.

“Oh,” Ranboo said, and then, “*Tommy,*” and arms circled around him, thin and bony and the best fucking thing he’d felt in ten loops.

He was safe. Ranboo would keep him together.

Tommy collapsed into the hug and let himself fall apart.

## Chapter End Notes

sorry abt low quality chapter last 2 weeks have been rough

this [twitter post by Noel/Min](#) inspired smol sam nook :D

[New fanart](#) by kaisus1234! It's so cool :D And blumitty\_m drew this [amazing remix fanart!!](#) <3

Someone asked about having a place to theorize about/discuss/leave ideas for this fic? I have considered making a Discord server but didn't because,,, conversations are hard. If I did make a server I wouldn't really talk there, just lurk - which I'm not sure you'd all be okay with. If you *are* ok with it, or if any of you know an alternative, lemme know.

### **Loop Notes**

**106.** When Technoblade broke into the prison, he was irritated to find that the cell was empty. Seriously, if Dream was gonna hire someone else to break him out, he could have at least told Techno so he wouldn't have to go through all the trouble.

**107.** In this case, drinking milk does make you grow taller. Drink your milk, kiddos.

**108.** Just because Sam Nook is one (1) foot tall and looks like an animal crossing character, does not mean that Sam Nook is any less capable of a fighter.



# Chapter 23

## Chapter Notes

mostly angst-free chapter :D enjoy

### Spotlighted Comments

**Crystalcatgamer:** Sam Nook: Call an ambulance!

Also Sam Nook, pulling out a trident: But not for me.

**Sunset\_vib3s:** "This fic is going to have a bittersweet ending".. \*throws tablet out the window\*

**Malu:** Sleep: "milk makes you grow big and strong"

Awake : "milk nullifies potion effects"

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

### 111. *(credit to MarienNori)*

“Tommy!” Wilbur called. “Tommy, where are you?”

The only answer was the echo of his own voice. Wilbur scowled and scrubbed a hand through his hair, stalking through the corridors of Pogtopia.

“Tommy, I swear to Prime if you’re--” he rounded the corner and froze.

A block of TNT sat smack-dab in the center of Pogtopia, bright red against the stone. The culprit was nowhere in sight; whoever had planted it was already long gone.

Well aware of the sudden pounding in his ears, Wilbur raked his gaze over the walls. His search revealed neither button nor pressure plate. Scuffing the dirt with his toe uncovered no lines of redstone.

But someone had snuck into Pogtopia. Someone had *snuck in*, and left a single block of TNT. Not to destroy it - no, if they wanted to blow Wilbur’s second nation up, they would have brought more TNT. This was a statement. A threat. There was someone out there who could get into the heart of their stronghold undetected, who could cause irreparable damage if they wanted to.

Wilbur stalked forward, dust swirling around his ankles. He stopped before the block and scrutinized it, then crouched and tried to pick it up. It fell apart in his hands, revealing. . . cake on the inside.

“What the fuck?” he muttered, dropping it. It was too late; the red frosting had already caked his gloves. He tried to wipe it off on the floor, but it just left a neon smear of frosting and left his gloves covered with frosting *and* dust. He scowled and peeled the gloves off, tossing them

into his inventory to be washed later, then squinted down at the cake. This. . . complicated things.

On one hand, it could still be interpreted as a threat. Even if the object left behind was harmless, someone *had* managed to get into Pogtopia undetected. But if it was a threat, why use a *cake* of all things? Making one took time and effort - it would have been much easier to just put down a block.

A glint caught his attention. Wilbur cocked his head, eyes narrowing at the silver gleam he could see among the cake crumbs. Flicking aside a chunk of cake, he extracted the object and held it up to the dim light.

It was a tube, a capped metal cylinder the size of his finger. He unscrewed the cap and turned it upside down, shaking it until the slip of paper fell into his hand. Wilbur unrolled it, bracing himself for a death threat.

*congrats on the new place! I made you a cake for your housewarming party :D it's vanilla,  
btw. i'm very proud of the frosting.*

*enjoy!*

“. . . What the fuck?”

---

*This loser has been farming for fourteen hours L. Take a break. Sllleeeeeeep. Don't you like sleep? C'mon Blade, it's been HOURS. You gotta be tired. Self care gang! Take a break. You know it's bad when the voices in your head are encouraging you to practice self care.*

“No.”

*Mans really just went 'self care? Don't know her'. It's true, we don't know her. We pog through the pain like MEN. Did you. . . did you just use pog unironically? EVERYONE SHUT UP AND GET HIM TO REST. It's only been fourteen hours though??? ONLY fourteen hours?! ONLY FOURTEEN HOURS?! Fuck fine yes I get it fourteen hours is a long time now sTOP SCREAMING AT ME!*

Technoblade huffed and reached his hoe, only to flinch back when his fingers met something that was *definitely not his hoe*. Whipping around, he stared. The voices went silent.

It looked like Technoblade had. . . dented his hoe. By touching it.

*Da fuck? Oh boy when did he drink a potion of strength? That's an iron hoe, there's no way he can dent that just by touching it - even with Strength. There's no particles!*

Yeah, no, something was wrong. Either he'd developed super strength without noticing it, or this hoe was an impostor.

Narrowing his eyes, Technoblade tried to pick it up again. The section of handle he'd tried to pick up lifted easily in his hand, leaving the rest of the hoe behind and revealing that it was . . cake.

What.

Technoblade poked the tip of the hoe. His finger sunk right into it, revealing that it, too, was cake.

*What.*

The voices cackled in a maelstrom of glee and confusion. *CAKE! Oh fuck everything is cake. IT'S ALL CAKE. Pogtopia is Cake. L'Manberg is Cake. We are cake. The world is Cake. Reality is Cake. Everything you know is Cake. LMAO HE'S SO CONFUSED-- we're confused too! Eat the cake! CONSUME IT. Wait if everything is cake does that mean he has to eat everything too? YES NOM THE DIRT. NO DO NOT NOM THE DIRT. But don't you want to know what wither skulls taste like? I mean the cake might be poisoned. BUT HOW OFTEN DO YOU GET TO SAY YOU ATE YOUR FARMING HOE? Lmao imagine if he just said that to Wilbur's face. THE CAKE IS A LIE-- SHUT, THAT REFERENCE CAN'T BE USED HERE--*

Technoblade stared at his cake-crust hand and decided that it was time to take a break.

---

Tommy glared up at the ceiling, rubbing the last bit of sleep from his eyes. He'd forgotten how *cold* Pogtopia could be. Paired with his paper-thin blankets, his sleep had been shitty at best.

Going by the faint light seeping in under his door, it was about half past six in the morning. Time to get up.

With monumental effort, he levered himself into a sitting position and swung his legs off the bed. Straightening his rumpled shirt, he shoved his foot into his shoe-- only to still when it caved under his sole.

Slowly, he lifted his foot. Yup, there were chunks of cake stuck to it.

“DREAM!”

**112.** *(credit to Skywritesalot)*

“We have built cobblestone walls outside, and we have shot one warning shot inside your walls.” Dream drew himself up, the enchantments on his netherite gear gleaming. “We have

NO MERCY! NO MERCY FOR YOU! We will come! We will burn down your houses, we will kill everything inside your walls, and . . and we'll. . .uh."

There was a moment of awkward silence. Dream's allies exchanged glances as the L'Manberg fighters tensed.

"Shit, I forgot. LINE!"

"Take back the land that's rightfully ours," Tommy called.

"And we'll take back the land that's rightfully ours!" Dream drew his sword and pointed it up at the L'Manbergians, ignoring the confused looks. "I want to see WHITE FLAGS! WHITE FLAGS, OUTSIDE YOUR BASE, BY TOMORROW, AT DAWN or you are DEAD!"

With that dramatic statement, he whirled on his heel and stalked away. Wilbur turned to Tommy.

". . . Line?" he asked.

Tommy snorted. "I dunno, man, I didn't memorize yours. Just make some inspirational shit up."

"I-- what? That's not what I meant--"

"Whatever," Tommy huffed. "This scene's already scuffed anyways, let's just skip to the next one."

"Tomm--"

Tommy was already hurrying away. "I'll be mining if you need me!" he called over his shoulder.

---

Tommy had been trying to take a nap when his communicator buzzed. He ignored it, only for it to go off twice in quick succession. He rolled over with a grumble and stuck a hand out from under the blankets, feeling about his bedside chest before his fingers closed around the device. He flipped it open and squinted at the screen.

## **World Chat**

<Dream>: @TommyInnit

<Dream>: help

<Dream>: line

Tommy squinted at the screen.

*<TommyInnit>: context?*

*<Dream>: uhhh having a friendly chat w lmanbrg cabinet*

*<Dream>: definitely a very friendly chat*

*<Dream>: tubbo just said something about trade*

*<TommyInnit>: Dream*

*<TommyInnit>: its an improv section*

*<TommyInnit>: just go with twwhatever*

*<Dream>: .*

*<Dream>: OH ITS IMPROV*

*<Dream>: forgot abt that whoops*

*<TommyInnit>: youre welcome*

*<TommyInnit>: now shut up im channeling my inner gogy*

*<Dream>: u could just mute the comm*

Tommy stared at the communicator. Right, he'd forgotten he could do that.

*<TommyInnit>: fuck off*

*<TommyInnit>: go threaten tubbo or something*

*<Dream>: It told yuo it's a \*\*\*\*friendly\*\*\*\* conversation*

Tommy rolled his eyes, chunked his communicator onto his bedside chest, and promptly settled back for a well-deserved nap.

---

“If you catch wind of Tommy, let me know because I’ve been out looking for him.”

Technoblade bobbed his head. “Yup. I’ll keep an eye out.”

There was an awkward silence. Dream shifted, “. . . Line,” he whispered.

“I tracked down a forest he chopped down,” Tommy said.

Technoblade instantly drew his sword, stepping between Dream and the cabinet Tommy was hiding in. Dream just huffed and moved back, out of stabbing range. “Thanks,” he muttered, then cleared his throat. “I tracked down a forest he chopped down, but his trail ended there. So if you see him, just-- let me know.”

Tecnoblade’s grip on his sword loosened. Dream could see the cogs whirling in his head even as he pasted a slightly bewildered, mostly panicked smile on his face. “Yeah, uh, will-- will do?”

“Alright,” Dream hummed, turning away. “Well, it was nice to see you.”

Technoblade remained tense, waiting, as Dream strolled out the door. The moment it swung shut, he rounded on Tommy. “*What?*” he demanded.

“Shhhh,” Tommy hissed. He shimmied out of the cabinet and got to his feet, dusting imaginary dirt off of his knees. “*He’s right outside.*”

“You just talked to him!”

“Off script! He doesn’t know I’m here!”

“What?”

“Nothing we do off script translates to reality,” Tommy said, like that explained *anything*. “They’re bloopers, they get ignored.”

“*What?*”

“Anyway,” Tommy deadpanned, wandering over to one of the chests and rummaging around. “Got any gapples? I’m starving.”

“Tommy--”

“Aha!”

“You can’t just--?”

Tommy took a large bite of the gapple and looked him in the eye. “I can and I will, bitch.”

---

“LINE!” Tommy screamed.

Dream stared at him. “Really?” he deadpanned. “Now?”

“Fuck off,” Tommy grumbled. “It’s kinda hard to recall ‘em when you’re about to drop a fuck ton of TNT on our heads. You’ve called it like ten times by now, it’s time I got to do it.”

Dream snorted. "Something about having 25 minutes, I think--"

"Mate," Philza cut in, "What the fuck are you doing?"

"Tommy forgot his lines," Dream said, like that explained anything. He turned to Tommy. "Hurry up, we're on a schedule here!"

"You're not even supposed to be here!" Tommy shouted back. "Go set up the TNT grid! Why the fuck are you in a tree?!"

"Because I like nature," Dream snarked. "I already set up the grid, I just need to turn it on--"

"Can someone explain?" Tubbo interrupted. Behind him, Fundy nodded emphatically. "Just, stop for a second and explain?"

Tommy buried his face in his hands and let out a long, long groan. When he finally peeled his hands away after a good twenty seconds, he rolled his eyes. "You know what? Fuck this. We're skipping this scene."

"Techno won't like that."

"Techno can fuck right off," Tommy sniffed. "He's your problem."

"L'Manberg needs to be destroyed for the plot to work."

"Fuck the plot. We'll turn L'Manberg into a commune or some shit. No more government. No more fighting. Problem solved."

Dream sighed. "... You know what? Fine." He cleared his throat. "Change of plans, we're not destroying L'Manberg!"

Technoblade appeared on the scene, a veritable army of hounds swarming around his feet. "What? What do you mean, we're not destroyin' L'Manberg?"

"I mean, we can, but after we do some peaceful negotiation first." At the incredulous stares he received, Dream shrugged. "Tommy said he could turn it into a commune. If he succeeds, we don't have to destroy the government, right?"

"That's not-- that's not the point. They need to *learn*."

Dream glanced between the TNT grid looming in the distance, Technoblade's army of wolves, and the L'Manbergians. "I think they get the point."

"We do," Tommy confirmed cheerily. "So you don't need to go ham. Ha, get it, ham? Because--"

The looks Dream and Technoblade turned on him would have put a wither to shame. Tommy deflated.

"Yeah, okay, shutting up now."

“As long as L’Manberg exists, someone’s going to try to create a government,” Philza cut in. “We can’t let it continue.”

Tommy barreled in with the delicacy of a trainwreck. “Look, old man, I get that you’re upset that Wilbur’s dead, but you can’t take it out on his nation--”

“Tommy.”

“It’s true!”

Dream let out a long, long, sigh. “ *Tommy--*”

“It’s our fucking nation, you can’t just barge in and tell us what to do--”

“It’s my SMP, I think I *can* barge in and tell you what to do--”

“--your claim on the SMP died the day you decided to become a manipulative piece of shit--”

“--*excuse* you, I got better--”

“--and now we’ve gone completely off the script, good job--”

“--and this is my fault *how?*”

Their audience looked back and forth between the two loopers like they were watching a particularly interesting ping-pong match. Tommy groaned and slapped a hand over his eyes.

“I didn’t want to do this, but. . . leave or I’ll obliterate you.”

“You and what army?”

A devious grin spread across Tommy’s face. “Glad you asked. Does Fred sound familiar to you?”

Dream stared at him. “. . . You didn’t.”

“But I *did*,” Tommy cackled. A dark cloud amassed on the horizon, swallowing the TNT grid. As it drew closer, a single spot of bright red became visible within the roiling darkness.

“Right,” Dream deadpanned. He turned to his two allies. “You can deal with this by yourself. Bye.”

“Wha--” Technoblade spluttered as Dream smashed a potion at his own feet. An eagle burst from the colorful fog, wheeled about once, and shot off. Technoblade and Philza stared after it, then turned back to the cloud.

The cloud, which was now close enough for them to see that it wasn’t a cloud, but rather a horde of withers. A horde of withers with a Swiftess effect, if the unnatural speed at which they were moving was taken into account. A wither sporting a bright red cowboy hat led the charge, its jaw unhinged in a terrible screech.



“Shit,” Philza said. And then the withers were upon them.

**113.** *(inspired by Ophtr)*

*“I hate this. I hate this. I hate this. I--”*

“Hate this, I get it,” Tommy groaned. “Look, it’s your fault for drinking a random potion--”

*“I thought it was water!”*

“You’re a fuckin’ *ghost*, you don’t need to drink water!”

*“I was thirsty!”*

“. . . Well, on the bright side, now we know how the potion affects ghosts.”

Dream’s smile was ever-present, but his narrowed eyes gave the distinct impression that he was glowering. *“Who knows, it might affect humans too. Why don’t you try drinking it?”*

“I like having arms, so I think I’ll pass.”

*“I hate you.”*

“Aww,” Tommy cooed, tapping Dream on the head. The blob reared back and headbutted him. “You don’t need to be so violent. What’s a tiny, miniscule homeless teletubby like you gonna do if you mess with the wrong guy?”

*“I hate you so, so much.”*

Tommy grinned. “Think of this as revenge for the wings potion. Except you brought it on yourself.”

*“Choke on your tongue and die.”*

“I’ll pass.” Tommy plucked Dream off the table. “Now come on, we need to show everyone your new and improved form!”

The ghost went still for a moment, then resumed struggling with double the urgency.

*“Tommy-- TOMMY, don’t you DARE--”*

Tommy cackled and set off at a run, ignoring the screeching blob. He had a Gogy to hunt down.

**114.** *(credit to UltimateNagitoSimp)*

“What,” Sam said, “the *fuck*.”

Puffy shifted, knuckles white around her trident. “Be careful,” she warned. “This might be another Egg situation.”

“What the fuck,” Sam repeated numbly. Foolish, currently human-sized, patted him on the back.

“Don’t worry, if it’s another Egg, I’ll just smite it.”

Sam looked up at the sky. “One day. Can’t we go one day without something trying to take over the server?”

“We don’t know if it *is* another Egg,” Puffy reminded him. “For all we know--”

“Greetings!”

The three of them whipped around, coming face to face with Tommy. The teenager was grinning wide and bright, his hands clasped in front of his chest. He was dressed completely in white, save for the viridian shawl draped over his shoulders.

“Greetings!” he chirped again. “Are you here to worship?”

Sam and Puffy exchanged glances. “. . . Uh,” Puffy started, her eyes darting from Tommy’s unnatural smile to his hands. “Just here to, uh, learn a bit more about, um--”

Tommy’s grin grew impossibly *wider*. “The Great Cactus?”

“Y-yes,” Sam said stiffly. “We want to. Learn. About the Great Cactus.”

Tommy’s head tilted, a motion so smooth that it seemed robotic. “Of course, of course. Potential converts are always welcomed.”

Swiveling around, he glided into the building. Sam stared after him, then turned to Puffy and Foolish.

“Are you sure this is a good idea?” he asked when Tommy was out of hearing distance. “If it *is* another Egg situation--”

“I told Niki where I was going. If I’m not home by five, she’ll alert the others. Besides, we have Foolish with us.”

Foolish cracked his knuckles. “Worst comes to worst, I’ll bust through the roof and carry you out.”

Sam grimaced. “Right. Okay.” He took a deep breath, adjusting his grip on his trident. “In we go.”

The three of them shuffled into the building, on high alert. Tommy was standing in the middle of the entrance hall with his back to them. His white robes seemed to glow in the weak light coming from the tiny windows above them. When they stepped in, he turned around, the unsettling smile still pasted on his face.

“Welcome to the Sanctuary,” he said. “Please, respect the Great Cactus. Do not eat in the Sanctuary, although drinking is permitted. Do not fight in the Sanctuary.”

“Do not touch the Great Cactus,” a second voice added. The three visitors tensed as Dream slid from the shadows, clad in white and green. A placid smile was pasted on his face. “Do not come within six feet of the Great Cactus. Do not consume anything except coconut juice within the presence of the Great Cactus.”

“Coconut juice?” Foolish asked. He winced when Puffy elbowed him. “I mean--”

“Coconut juice,” Tommy said gravely. “Coconut trees are the enemy of the Great Cactus.”

“I see,” Sam said in a way that meant he absolutely did not see at all. Neither ‘priest’ seemed to notice, instead nodding at each other before turning to the visitors.

“Are you ready?” they asked in unison.

Puffy exchanged glances with Sam and Foolish. “Yes. . .?”

Tommy smiled, his teeth gleaming in the dim light. Puffy grimaced as goosebumps crawled up her arms. “Excellent.”

“Right this way,” Dream intoned, turning away. Tommy mirrored his movements. Together, they pushed open the oak double doors, revealing the innermost part of the Sanctuary.

. . . It was surprisingly normal, as far as rooms (cult rooms?) were concerned. It somewhat resembled the interior of Church Prime, with a different color scheme and setup. The room was divided by four paths through the rows of wooden pews that encircled the center of the room. In place of a podium, a single cactus stuck up from the sand.

Speaking of that, *sand*. The floor of the sanctuary was entirely composed of it - how long had it taken Tommy and Dream to cart it in and dump it? Better yet, how was the floor outside of the sanctuary sand-free? By logic, some of it should have been tracked out via boot or the hem of the priests’ long robes, yet there wasn’t a single speck of yellow on the green carpet.

It defied logic. Puffy shivered and decided to stop thinking about it.

“This isn’t as bad as I was expecting,” Foolish whispered. “I thought there would be, like, more blood or something. Human sacrifices.”

“We do not sacrifice humans,” Dream said. Foolish jumped. “We do, however, sacrifice coconuts to the Great Cactus. The life fluid of the coconuts nourishes its glorious existence.”

“Right, right, I should have known.” Foolish laughed nervously, his skin paling to rose-gold. “I was joking about the human sacrifice thing. No offense?”

“It is normal for the ignorant to make mistakes,” Tommy said. “Do not worry, the Great Cactus understands.”

Puffy discreetly raised a hand to massage her temples. Great. Wonderful. That confirmed that the Great Cactus was sentient. This was starting to look more and more like an Egg 2.0.

“Now come,” Dream said. He turned around, robes flaring dramatically. “The Great Cactus wishes to meet you.”

“I have a bad feeling about this,” Sam muttered.

“Too late to back out now,” Puffy muttered back. She took a deep breath. “No way to go but forward.”

“At least it doesn’t look like they do human sacrifice?”

Sam and Puffy leveled matching flat looks at Foolish, who chuckled and raised his hands. “Just saying!”

“Don’t even joke about that,” Puffy said, but her voice was fond. She mentally shook herself. They were on a mission, they didn’t have time for this. “Let’s go before they get suspicious.”

Together, the visitors followed the two priests into the heart of the sanctuary.

---

The two loopers froze as they blinked awake in Dream’s underground base. Tommy had Dream backed up against the wall and a crossbow leveled at his face, presumably to take his second canon life. They gaped at each other for a moment.

And then Dream started wheezing. Several people flinched back as Tommy joined him, doubling over with laughter.

“Tommy?” Tubbo called. “Tommy, what. . . what are you doing?”

Tommy inhaled, managing to compose himself for a precious few seconds. “Cactus,” he choked out.

“Cactus,” Dream agreed. And then they both devolved into hysterics.

### **115. *loop zero***

Sapnap shut the door as slowly as he could, holding his breath as it had clicked shut. When nothing happened to indicate that he’d woken the person sleeping inside, he let himself relax slightly, running a hand through his hair.

“So how is he?”

Sapnap nearly jumped out of his skin. “FUCK!” he yelped, whipping around, only to clap his hands over his mouth. Dream stared back at him, mask pushed to the side of his head. In the dim light, his curiosity was still clear.

Sapnap sighed, uncovering his mouth. “Why the fuck are you awake?”

Dream hummed. “I could ask you the same thing.”

Sapnap sent him a flat look. “Isn’t it obvious?”

“Right. So how is he?”

“Asleep,” Sapnap snarked. “I think. I might have woken him up when you scared me.” At Dream’s unimpressed stare, he huffed. “He’s a bit more coherent now. Calmer. Though he kept muttering something about paths and strings.”

Dream frowned. “. . . Paths and strings?”

“I’m just as lost as you are, man,” Sapnap deadpanned. “Anyway, I got his name before he passed out. It’s Karl.”

“With a C or a K?”

“No idea. Not even sure if it’s his real name.” Sapnap sighed. “. . . Do you think we can trust him? You didn’t invite him, but. . .”

“I don’t know,” Dream admitted. “He was-- I think he was actually terrified when we found him. Emotion like that can’t be faked. He didn’t get into the server legally, but I don’t think it was his choice.”

Sapnap sighed. “Who the hell would hack a server just to send someone else in?”

“And why?” Dream shook his head. “Nevermind, we can ask him tomorrow. It’s been a long day. Get some sleep.”

Sapnap grunted and trudged away down the corridor, presumably to pass out in his bed. Dream waited until he was gone, then quietly opened the door.

The stranger (Karl, if that’s what his name really was) lay in the bed, deathly still. Even in the darkness, Dream could see the frown twisted across his face. No thrashing to indicate nightmares, though - he’d really worn himself out panicking earlier.

Dream closed the door, hesitated for a moment, then locked it. Sapnap had found the man in the middle of the woods, and while he hadn’t done anything to harm them, Dream had been burned one too many times to trust a stranger.

Letting out a heavy sigh, he turned on his heel and headed towards the kitchen. He had a feeling he wouldn’t be getting any sleep tonight.

## Chapter End Notes

Me, writing loop zero, ot!Karl's lore, and ot in general: Canon divergence? In this fic? Impossible

[Toddler tales fanart](#) by bearalexi25!! And [character designs](#) by ColorNS! :D

### **Loop Notes**

**112.** The L'Manbergians were not informed about Tommy's plan, but Tommy made sure to introduce his friends to his emotional support wither (Fred - see 45 in Chapter 9) as an apology. Tubbo was not amused. (Okay, he was. Just a little bit. Fundy and Quackity's faces were really funny.)

**113.** Dream soon remembered that he was a ghost, and thus could become intangible. Cue Manhunt music.

**115.** The L'Manbergians were not informed about Tommy's plan, but Tommy made sure to introduce his friends to his emotional support wither (Fred - see 45 in Chapter 9) as an apology. Tubbo was not amused. (Okay, he was. Just a little bit. Fundy and Quackity's faces were really funny.)

Quackity's faces were really funny.

Key: The L'Manbergians were not informed about Tommy's plan, but Tommy made sure to introduce his friends to his emotional support wither (Fred - see 45 in Chapter 9) as an apology. Tubbo was not amused. (Okay, he was. Just a little bit. Fundy and Quackity's faces were really funny.)

# Chapter 24

## Chapter Notes

Hello. Sorry for the long wait. I was really dissatisfied w/ most of this chapter but I didn't wanna leave y'all hanging

I'm going thru some mental health struggles right now, so updates might slow down significantly/plot may speed up significantly after chapter 25. I apologize in advance for poor pacing

### Spotlighted Comments

**Crystalcatgamer:** on temporizing, we have crack: more potion shenanigans (I would say dump him in a bucket of milk, but nah, Blob Dream <3 Also he might end up drowning if he has no actual mouth-), manhunts (anyone hear dudududu in the distance?) and- what's that? Belle with the steel lore chair? OH GODS THEY'RE RUNNING THEY'RE CHASING THEY'RE THROWING THE CHAIR-

And shoutout to **egg\_salad** for cracking the key, **Artical** for cracking the first layer of the code, and **AlbiNora** for cracking the entire code!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

## 116.

“Where’d he go?!”

“He just-- disappeared,” Punz muttered. His gaze raked over the foliage. “He has to be in here somewhere - it’s open plains for another half-mile in every direction. We would’ve spotted him if he ran.”

“So he’s hiding,” Sapnap grumbled. “Great.”

George groaned. “Can we just go home? He’s a kid, he probably doesn’t have much information--”

“He’s Wilbur’s right-hand man,” Dream said. “We can’t lose him.”

“I’m with George on this one. There’s like, a hundred trees. Tommy’s probably hiding in one of them, waiting to get the drop on us.” Sapnap shuddered, eyes growing distant. “Prime knows how he acts like a feral raccoon. . .”

Punz coughed out something that sounded suspiciously like *rabies*.

Dream’s axe disappeared in a flash. The others turned to him, alert, but Dream just ignored them and took a deep breath.

“JUMP IN THE CADILLAC!” he hollered. Just in case Tommy couldn’t hear him, he cupped his hands around his mouth and projected his voice as far as he could. “LET’S PUT SOME MILES ON IT! YOU DESERVE--”

“TO DIE!” Tommy howled, bursting from the foliage with his axe swinging. Dream ducked under the attack and pushed him over when he overbalanced, then proceeded to disarm him and sit on his back while he spouted expletives.

“Caught him,” he grunted, twisting Tommy’s arms behind his back and attempting to tie them together. Tommy wrestled one arm free and nailed him in the ribs. “Ow! Just stay still--”

“FUCK YOU!” Tommy screeched, thrashing wildly. “I WILL DESTROY EVERYTHING AND EVERYONE YOU CARE ABOUT!”

“Oh no,” Dream droned with the air of someone who had received the same threat many times before. “What a tragedy. I definitely don’t have a way to bring them back.”

Twisting his head downwards, Tommy sank his teeth into the collar of his Revolutionary uniform and jerked his head around. Yellow powder puffed into the air, dusting Dream’s face. The man reeled back, loosening his hold on Tommy, and Tommy bucked up and threw him off, rolling away from Punz as the mercenary tried to grab him.

At that moment, Dream began to sneeze uncontrollably. Tommy began sneezing as well as he rolled to his feet, his eyes watering with the force of it. Ducking under Sapnap’s swipe, he withdrew a glass bottle from his inventory and smashed it open. Sapnap reared back, but it was too late - he, too, began to sneeze. George and Punz met similar fates when they stepped in. Tommy escaped in the ensuing chaos.

Two hours later, when they had managed to sneeze the drugs from their system, George peeled his face off the floor of the Community house and squinted at Dream. “So what was with the whole Bruno Mars bit?”

Dream, who had previously melted into the floor in a puddle of misery, burst into cackling. The sneezing left him sounding like something between an obnoxious koala and a cat choking on a hairball. “317,” he wheezed. “I’m-- never gonna-- let him live that down.”

“... 317?”

Dream just cackled some more, and no matter how much his friends pressed him, he refused to elaborate.

## 117.

Ranboo was very confused.

It had been five hours since he’d joined the Dream SMP, and now he was standing in Niki’s bakery, nose pressed to the window and eyes wider than dinner plates. Niki, standing behind



him, let out a chuckle.

“Don’t worry, it’s normal.”

“Normal,” Ranboo repeated. He peeled his face away from the window long enough to send her a dubious look. “It’s *normal* for it to rain glitter.”

“Maybe not on a vanilla server,” Niki admitted. “But on the Dream SMP, we make it a point to defy world mechanics.”

“. . . So it literally rains glitter here?”

“The glitter rain isn’t natural - it’s from Dream’s glitter machine.”

“Glitter machine,” Ranboo echoed.

“Don’t worry too much about it-- the glitter’s ‘edible and a hundred percent environmentally friendly’ according to Dream, and when it *actually* rains, it dissolves. No harm done.” Niki paused. “Except for the Glitter Flood of ‘21, but we don’t talk about that.”

“The *what*-- ”

The door of the bakery swung open. A man strolled in, miraculously glitter-free. He was dressed in a soft-looking white sweater and black slacks, topped off with a brown coat that flared dramatically with every movement. A pair of circular glasses rested on his face, frames the same gold sheen as the teardrop dangling from his left ear. “Hello!” he sang.

“Wil!” Niki beamed. “How’d you get here without an umbrella?”

“Wil” tapped his earring. “A mix of Knockback and Float with a surface area matrix,” he explained. “Fundy invented it, actually. He got tired of shaking glitter out of his shoes.”

“Let him know that I need one of those.”

“Pretty sure he’s already making you one,” the man admitted. He turned to Ranboo. “And who might you be?”

“Oh, um, R-Ranboo. Nice to meet you. Sir.”

The man snorted. “Wilbur Soot. Call me Wilbur. None of that ‘sir’ business, it makes me feel old.” He paused. “Not that I’m old. And now I’m getting off topic. When’d you join the server?”

Ranboo frowned. “Uh-- five hours ago, give or take.”

Wilbur lit up. “Ah, a newbie! Haven’t seen it rain glitter before, have you?”

“No, it was certainly, uh, a surprise.”

Wilbur snorted. “You’ll get used to it. And the other stuff too.”

“The. . . *other* stuff?”

Niki barreled into the conversation before Wilbur could answer. “So what’re you here for, Wil?”

“Partially to test the earring, partially to ask if you had any crow cookies.”

Niki perked up. “Oh, Tommy sent over a batch of potions this morning! How many do you want?”

“Just one and a milk capsule.” Wilbur grinned, all teeth and wily mischief. “My old man joined yesterday, and I think it’s high time I messed with him.”

Niki sighed, disappearing behind the counter. She reappeared with a paper bag, which she handed to Wilbur. “Don’t break his brain too much,” she said. “You know what happened to Foolish.”

Wilbur *smiled*. “Eh, Phil can handle it.” He flipped a gold coin at the baker, who caught it with a dexterity that spoke of experience. “Thanks Niki, you’re the best.”

Ranboo eyed the bag with poorly-hidden curiosity. Wilbur caught his eye. “Ah, he doesn’t know about the cookies yet, does he?”

“No,” Niki confirmed cheerily. Ranboo felt a chill go down his spine. “But you might as well demonstrate.”

Wilbur snorted, removed his earring and glasses and dropped them into his inventory. With a theatrical flourish, he pulled a. . . cookie out of his bag. Ranboo was pretty sure it was a cookie. It appeared to be made of dark chocolate (that, or Niki had somehow burned the cookie, because Ranboo didn’t know what else could produce that shade of black) and had been baked in the shape of a. . . bird? Yeah, it looked like a bird.

Wilbur proceeded to aggressively bite the bird's head off. Ranboo took a step back, tail twining around his leg as the man devoured the cookie with unwarranted aggressiveness. When he finished, he brushed crumbs off his chin, winked at Ranboo, and. . . disappeared.

What.

“What,” Ranboo said, staring at the pile of clothes Wilbur had left behind on the floor. His gaze switched to Niki, who was hunched over, giggling into her hand. “I-- Niki, *what*. ”

The pile of clothes shifted. Ranboo screeched, vaulting over Niki’s counter and throwing himself to the floor. Tail lashing, he peeked out over the countertop to see a small black shape wiggling itself out of the cloth.

It was a bird. A crow, to be exact. The crow pecked at the clothing, which vanished in a flash. Ranboo’s jaw fell open, because last time he checked, only players had inventories. Which meant the crow was--

“*Wilbur?!*”

Niki's giggles evolved into full-blown laughter. The crow cawed and flapped its wings, then hopped over to the door and whacked it. Niki regained control of herself long enough to shove it open, then fell back into laughter at the look on Ranboo's face when Wilbur performed a mock salute and took off.

When she finally calmed down, she grinned. "So how's your first day on the server so far?"

Ranboo turned a blank stare on her. "He just ate a cookie and *turned into a bird.*"

Niki grinned wider.

". . . My brain is broken."

As if on cue, someone walked through the door of the bakery. Through, as in *phased through solid wood*. "Niki!" The teenager called. "I died again, can I borrow your comm?"

"Where did yours go?"

"Lava." The ghost (?????) scowled. The ectoplasmic lava spiderwebbed beneath his skin burned hotter. "I hate the Nether."

Niki winced and handed him her comm. "Ghasts again?"

"Went hunting for blaze rods. Apparently the fuckers don't like being stabbed." The ghost held the communicator up to his ear. "No," he bit out to the person on the other end. "It's Tommy. I went swimming in lava."

A pause. "No it wasn't on purpose, fuck off! I don't care if you're upgrading your glitter machine-- no. No! Just get over here and revive me."

He hung up with an aggressive jab of his finger and handed the communicator back to Niki. "Thanks, Niki." He turned to Ranboo. "New here, ay? Welcome to the Dream SMP. Can't give you a tour 'cuz I'm a bit dead right now, but I'll show you around when I get better."

Ranboo stared at him and wondered if it was too late to leave the server.

**118.**

"Are you sure this is a good idea?"

"Tubbo, it's a truth potion. Worst thing that'll happen is throwing up." Tommy shook the bottle, ignoring Tubbo's wince. "I do this all the time. It'll be fine."

He downed the potion in one gulp. Tubbo watched him, hands twitching nervously.

"Everything good?"

“... Yeah.” Tommy frowned. His vision was a little blurry. “Hurry up and ask me something.”

“Oh. Right. Uh, what-- what color’s the sky?”

“Red.” Tommy paused. “Ask another one.”

“How old are you?”

“Seventeen-- huh. Maybe it takes a while to kick in?”

Tubbo winced. “Are you sure you’re okay? You look-- you look a bit, uh. . .”

Tommy shook his head, setting the empty bottle down on the table. Tubbo was getting blurrier by the minute. He blinked a few times.

“Tommy?”

Tommy reached up to rub his eyes. Was it just him, or was the world looking a little--

---

“Everything is soup, if you think about it. It’s all soup. Cereal is soup. Tea is soup. Water is just soup base. Time is soup in a giant bowl, stirred with a cosmic stirring spoon and it goes around and around.”

“Okay,” said the blur he was talking to. “Do you want to get down from the tree now?”

Tommy scowled and tightened his grip on the tree branch he was clinging to. “No.”

The blur sighed. “Go get Fundy,” it said to another blur. “He’s a better climber.”

“I’m not going down!” Tommy shrieked. “The tree’s my home! My fortress! Fuck the ground, it’s lava soup! I’m gonna-- I’m gonna move to the Antarctica server and become a flying squirrel!”

“Tommy, there aren’t any flying squirrels in Antarctica. Or trees.”

Tommy bared his teeth and hissed. At that moment, another blur appeared, this one bright orange.

“Tubbo said Tommy was stuck? Where’s-- oh.”

“You’re a better climber,” the first blur said. “Can you get him down before he hurts himself?”

“Yeah, I’ll. . . I’ll try.” The orange blur approached the tree. Tommy clutched the tree branch.

“Don’t come any closer!” he shouted. “I’ll-- I’ll murderize you!”

“Just stay calm, Tommy,” the blur on the ground soothed. “You’re gonna be okay.”

Tommy glared at it. Hm. Now that he was looking at it, he’d realized that it looked very attackable. But if he attacked, he’d have to give up the tree.

“We had a good run,” he told the bark. “But I’m off to better places. Greener pastures. Tastier lava soup. Beat anyone that tries to cut you down, okay?”

The tree hummed its agreement.

“Awesome,” Tommy said. And then he leapt off the tree branch.

Alarmed shouts rang around him, but he spread his arms. He was a flying squirrel. He was the master of gliding. The best. His target dove forward and made an unnecessary attempt to catch him. They ended up in a tangled heap on the ground.

Tommy blinked up at the blur, dazed. “Oh hey Wilby,” he giggled. “Your face looks funny.”

Wilbur opened his mouth to speak. Tommy punched him in the jaw.

---

Tommy cackled, basking in the glorious warmth. He was unstoppable. The supreme power. God of the sun. Apollo had nothing on him. Tommy was the new Supreme Sun Deity now. He was gonna take over the galaxy. Intimidate everything with his overwhelming power and bring the world into a state of eternal summer. Technoblade couldn’t create an Arctic Anarchist commune if there wasn’t an Arctic!

“Found him! He’s h-- WHERE THE FUCK DID HE GET FLINT AND STEEL?!”

“Where did he get *what?!?*”

“Huh, so that’s where the smoke came from.”

“STOP TALKING AND HELP ME PUT OUT THE FIRE!”

---

Tommy squinted at the blur. “You’re blue.”

“Yes?” The blur asked. “I mean-- my clothes are blue, yes. Why are you here?”

“You’re blue,” Tommy repeated. “Like water. Like a cloud.”

“What?”

“You’re a cloud now.”

The cloud paused. “Are you-- are you *high?*”

“I’m not high,” Tommy sniffed. “You’re just low. And how dare you insinuate that. I’d never ever ever do drugs.”

“You literally started a drug van with Wilbur.”

“I am so insulted. I cannot believe this slander. I hope you trip over a rock and die.”

The cloud remained silent for a long moment. “I’m too tired for this,” it decided.

“Yeah bitch, run!” Tommy shouted at its retreating back. Then he passed out.

---

“Tommy?”

Tommy groaned, peeling his eyelids apart. The sun shone down upon him, partially blocked by a familiar figure.

“Tommy,” the figure repeated. “Are you okay?”

Tommy beamed. “Dream! You’re a blob!”

“I’m a blob?” Dream sounded baffled.

“A green blob,” Tommy agreed, pushing himself into a sitting position. His head swam.

“Homeless. . . homeless green blob.”

Dream laid a hand against his forehead. Tommy batted it away. “Nuh-uh. I’m not the cat, I’m the squirrel.”

“You’re burning up,” Dream said. “Where’s Wilbur?”

“He’s a blur,” Tommy giggled. “An acorn. A spot in the ground. I utterly obliterated him with my-- with my amazing sun-glidey powers.”

“Okay. We’re taking you to L’Manberg.”

“No!”

“... No?”

“No,” Tommy insisted. There were bright lights in the distance, rising from the trees. “Dun’ wanna go inside. The stars are pretty.”

“ . . . Tommy, it’s three in the afternoon.”

“The staaaars,” Tommy slurred. He grabbed Dream’s hand and pointed it at a cluster of lights. “Look, it’s hot girl.”

Dream sighed. “Okay gremlin, I think it’s time for bed.”

Tommy found himself slung over Dream’s shoulder like a sack of potatoes. A very long, lanky sack of potatoes. He was a lanky strong boy. Lankier and stronger than Ranboo. “Noooo,” he whined, slamming his fists into Dream’s back. “Don’-- don’ wanna. I don’t need sleep. Sleep is for the weak.”

“You’re sick,” Dream said. “You need to sleep.”

“I’m not sick, *you’re* sick.”

“Pretty sure that’s not how it works.”

---

“Dream!”

Tommy jerked out of the light doze he’d fallen into, blinking blearily at the ground. He was still a sack of potatoes, but the world was different now. There was a big wall. A big, big wall, with lots of blurs in front of it.

“Let go of him,” one blur snarled.

“Okay, okay!” Tommy found himself being set on the ground. “Can you point that somewhere else? I’m not going to do anything.”

“Tommy, come here,” the blur said. Tommy frowned.

“No.”

“No?”

“No.” Tommy nodded to himself. He liked No. No was a very good word. “I have a mission.” Probably. Maybe. He couldn’t exactly remember what it was, but it would come back to him when he got started.

“You can complete your mission after you sleep,” Dream said. He pushed him forward. Just to be contrary, Tommy didn’t walk with the motion and fell flat on his face. Like a man.

“Ow,” he said into the grass.

“Tommy!” someone cried. Arms wiggled their way under his shoulders and hoisted him up. Tommy went limp, pulling the person down with him.

“No,” he repeated.

“Oh for fuck’s sake,” someone muttered. A second pair of arms slid under his torso and hoisted him into the air. He found himself in a fireman’s carry. So he did the only reasonable thing he could do.

He tried to bite them in the shoulder.

Unfortunately, said shoulder was covered with an iron pauldron. His teeth scraped uselessly against the metal. He settled for gnawing at it.

“I’ll-- just leave now,” Dream said. “Uh-- let me know if you need anything?”

Stone-cold silence. Dream, ultimate Gaslight, was experiencing the ultimate Gatekeep. Tommy wasn’t sure where the ultimate Girlboss was. Maybe *he* was the ultimate girlboss. He was definitely a boss. The biggest man there was.

“Okay,” Dream said awkwardly. And then he ran like the coward he was. Tommy stopped chewing on the pauldron long enough to laugh at him.

“. . . Should we just. . . I don’t know, knock him out?”

“Let him wear himself out,” the person carrying him said. “Tubbo, you said this was a. . . potion, right?”

“Truth potion. He said it was, um, supposed to be like a mild fever?”

“We don’t know how Weakness might affect him then. Better not to risk it. He’ll knock himself out sooner or later.”

Oh, were they *underestimating him*?

Challenge accepted.

---

Tommy awoke with a pounding headache and a deep, unshakeable sense of *regret*.

“Urgh,” he croaked, turning his face away from the light. “Can the sun just shut the fuck up?”

“Tommy!” Tubbo’s voice drove nails into his brain. Hurried footsteps heralded the rasping of curtains. “Sorry, we thought sunlight would be good for you. Are you. . . uh, *awake* this



time?”

Tommy peeked one baleful eye from beneath the blanket. “No shit, bitch.”

“Do you still think you’re a squirrel?”

“No?” Tommy paused. “A squirrel?”

Tubbo looked relieved. “Oh thank *Prime*.”

“Wait, wait wait, no Tubbo, you can’t just say that and not explain!” Tommy tried to push himself up, only for his arms to give out like wet noodles. “Fuck,” he hissed into the pillow, then to Tubbo, “What the fuck do you mean ‘do I think I’m a squirrel’? Did I think I was a squirrel?”

“Not exactly,” Tubbo hedged. “More like Huitzilopochtli reincarnated as a flying vampire squirrel.”

“Bless you,” Tommy said. Then his brain caught up to the rest of the words. “Wait, what?”

“No, no, Huitzilopochtli’s the Aztec sun god,” Tubbo corrected, just a *touch* too gleefully. “Though I guess you weren’t Huitzilopochtli specifically-- really an unspecified sun god reincarnated as a squirrel, but I assumed things since you kept demanding the blood of your enemies.”

“What?” Tommy repeated.

“Anyway!” Tubbo clapped his hands cheerily, driving more nails into Tommy’s brain. Tommy got the vague impression that he was feeling a sort of vindictive pleasure from Tommy’s suffering. “Fundy’s missing, Wilbur’s crying in a corner somewhere, and L’Manberg is in fucking shambles, so I came to check if you were lucid yet. Which you are!”

“Which I am,” Tommy echoed, a bit bemusedly. “Is-- is Wilbur really crying in a corner?”

“Has been since the last time you woke up,” Tubbo chirped. “But to be fair, nobody expected you to burn your house down. Which is why you’re in my house now.”

“I *what*?”

Tubbo patted him on the arm, a motion made awkward by the fact that Tommy was still flopped on the bed like a dead fish. “You burned your house down. And a good chunk of L’Manberg. Which is why Wilbur is crying in a corner.”

Tommy made a second attempt to sit up. He was fairly successful this time, though he had to prop himself up against the wall. “. . . What the fuck happened?”

“You don’t remember?”

“No?” Tommy squinted at him. “Wait, I. . . we were testing a truth potion, right? I drank it, and then-- seriously, Tubbo, what happened? What the fuck did I do?”

Tubbo's smile slid off his face. He took a deep breath and stared Tommy dead in the eye with a gravitas that sent warning bells off in his head.

"Tommy, and I mean this in the nicest way possible-- *never* get sick again."

119. *toddler tales, pt. 8* ([see previous parts of this loop here](#))

"Remind me why we're running away again?"

"Why not?"

Tommy scowled, tugging his cloak a bit tighter around himself. "Puffy had food and shelter--"

--which we can easily get ourselves--"

--we *can't*, because we don't have *shit*." Tommy kicked a stray stick. "Unless you wanna use *this* to beat a rabbit to death. Or a zombie. If we get mauled, I'm blaming you."

Dream scowled at him and sped up. Just to be petty, Tommy began taking larger steps. His longer legs easily kept pace with Dream's stubby ones.

Dream's scowl deepened. "Cheater."

"Not my fault that you didn't want milk," Tommy sniffed. He glanced at the conspicuous lack of civilization around them. "Where are we going?"

"Nowhere." Tommy stopped in his tracks, sending him a *look*. Dream huffed. "Look, I was-- I stole a couple buckets of milk. I was thinking we could-- change back?"

Tommy blinked, caught off guard. "What?"

Dream sighed, scrubbing a hand through his hair. "This whole-- kid business, it's funny but I don't think it's a good idea to keep going."

Tommy frowned. "Why not?"

"It isn't safe."

"Are you talking about Quackity?"

"No, that's not--" Dream sighed. "You remember when we agreed to at least *try* to keep our morals in check?"

"Yeah?" Tommy's eyes widened. "Wait, you mean you think this thing hurts them or something?"

Dream shuffled in place. “Not any. . . worse than anything we’ve done before, but Tubbo looked. . .” he sighed. “I’m worried about what will happen if we run into more people.”

“George and Sapnap.”

“Yes.” Dream ducked his head, fingers twitching nervously. “It’s not that this isn’t fun, it is, but now that we’ve figured out how to undo it--”

“Dream,” Tommy interrupted. “Do whatever the fuck you want. You’re your own person, if you don’t want to keep this up, you don’t have to.”

Dream’s shoulders relaxed. “Okay. Yeah. I’m going to change back.”

Tommy smirked. “. . . But you’re still gonna be shorter than me--”

“Shut up.”

---

Quackity ran his thumb over the name engraved in the metal.

*Technoblade.*

After he found the discarded ankle monitor, he’d returned to the tunnel where Technoblade killed him two weeks ago. Philza was long gone, but it was likely that he’d used this same tunnel to escape, and Quackity had hoped to gather some clues. He’d found the compass lying on the ground, forgotten and seemingly broken. The metal was dented and the glass cover was scattered in fragments across the ground.

He knew this compass. It was the one he’d used to find Technoblade the first time. He’d watched through blood-streaked vision as Technoblade tore it off of his belt and shattered it beneath his heel. It had been left here, likely as a last ‘fuck you’ to him. It should have infuriated him, *would* have infuriated him if not for one thing: the lodestone wasn’t broken.

Lodestones. They were the most important part of the compass, the thing that would point it in the direction it was meant to go. Technoblade had probably meant to crush the lodestone when he’d destroyed the compass, but he’d missed.

And now Quackity had a way to track him down. Philza, too, seeing as the man had most likely joined him.

Fingers clenched tightly around the compass, the Vice President of L’Manberg spun on his heel and stalked out of the tunnel.

“Yeah, well-- remember-- remember the guy we’ve been talking about? The-- the one who hurt me?”

“Yes.”

Tommy licked his lips. “Um. I, uh, I learned something. Something. Bad. He’s not doing anything to me,” he added when Puffy’s face darkened. “It was. Uh. He was, I think he was-- tortured?”

The words hung in the uneasy silence. Puffy adjusted her grip on the clipboard. “I . . . see. And how does that make you feel?”

Tommy gritted his teeth. “See, he was-- hurt ‘cause this other guy. Wanted information about something he knew. But um, I *knew* the other guy, he was always real nice to me and I think-- I think he was uh, upset, about the-- the stuff *he* did, right, to me and everyone else, and *he* suffered for a really long time-- and that was part of why he hurt him. Thing was, nobody *knew* it was happening-- and like, yeah, he hurt me, but he got hurt too, so. . .”

Puffy set her clipboard down. "Tommy. He was hurt, yes. But that doesn't mean it was okay for him to hurt you."

Tommy knit his hands together and didn't look up. "You didn't see 'im," he muttered. "You didn't see what. . . what they did to him. He-- he was the absolute worst, but-- he didn't. . . I don't think he deserved to be tortured."

"Nobody does," Puffy said gently. "What they did to him was wrong, but what he did to you was also wrong. Trauma doesn't absolve someone of their crimes."

Tommy scrubbed a hand through his hair. "No, I-- I get that-- I do-- It's just-- he's suffered enough, hasn't he? He paid for what he did and now all I need to do is forgive him but my stupid fucking brain--"

“Tommy.”

Tommy stilled.

Puffy’s eyes softened. She set her clipboard down. “Tommy, forgiveness-- it doesn’t work like that. Suffering isn’t equivalent exchange. He hurt you. Someone else hurt him. Those two *don’t cancel each other out.*”

Tommy gnawed on the inside of his cheek. “But. . .”

“Think of it this way. Let’s say, hmm, you know Foolish, right?” At Tommy’s nod, she continued. “He’s one of my closest friends, and I care a lot about him. Then let’s say Bad killed Foolish.”

Tommy blinked. “That-- what the fuck--”

“It’s just an analogy,” Puffy assured. “So let’s say Bad killed Foolish. I’d be mad, wouldn’t I?”

“I’d say a bit more than ‘mad’,” Tommy deadpanned.

“I . . . yeah, that’s true, I’d be out for his blood. But then let’s say. . . let’s say someone else killed Skeppy because they were upset that Bad killed Foolish.” Puffy grimaced. “You do know how Bad and Skeppy--”

“Yeah, yeah, they’re like fuckin’ best friends for life or some shit,” Tommy muttered. “What’s the point?”

“Well, if someone killed Skeppy as revenge for Bad killing Foolish, do you think I’d forgive Bad?”

“No?” Tommy scoffed. “That’s-- those are two completely different thi . . . ngs. . . oh. *Oh.*”

“Maybe Bad would feel sorry,” Puffy said. “And maybe we’d be able to understand each other better - but just because he went through the same pain I did doesn’t mean I’d forgive him.”

“I get that,” Tommy admitted. “I . . . I do. But-- ugh--”

Puffy waited patiently as he got his thoughts in order. At last Tommy huffed, twisting his hands together and falling back into the chair.

“I just. . . I feel like he’s been hurt enough. He doesn’t need more.”

“But do you feel ready to forgive him?”

“. . . No,” Tommy whispered.

“And that’s okay,” Puffy said. “That’s perfectly okay, Tommy. You don’t have to forgive him.”

“But if I don’t forgive him, won’t that just hurt him more?”

Puffy hummed. “How about this? Take him to someone who can help him recover. He’s been hurt. Help him hurt less. You don’t have to forgive him, but you can help him hurt less.”

Tommy stared at her. “. . . You’re right,” he muttered. “You’re-- yeah, no, I can-- I can do that.”

Puffy frowned. “I’m not trying to pressure you to do anything. If you don’t feel comfortable with the idea--”

“But I’d feel even shittier if I didn’t do anything,” Tommy told her. “It’s. . . really, it’s a good idea. Thank you.”

Puffy studied him for a moment longer, then smiled. “I’m glad I could help. If you need something, just let me know.”

“A nice, hot cup of mental stability would be nice.”

Puffy barked out a surprise laugh. "I don't think it works like that, but I wish it did." She twirled her pen. "So, same time next week?"

---

Stepping out into the crisp winter air, Tommy tilted his head back and watched as his breath left his mouth in icy white puffs. The wind swept them northward, in the direction of Pandora' Vault.

He didn't have to forgive Dream. He wasn't planning to anytime soon. But he could help Dream recover. And to do that, he'd have to do one of two things - either stop Quackity, or break Dream out of his inescapable prison.

He shoved his hands in his pockets and buried a sardonic smile in his scarf.

Looks like he had his work cut out for him.

## Chapter End Notes

I dunno where to go with the [dreaxter loop](#), any suggestions?

Also: we now have a [discord server](#)! The long comment chains on the last chapter convinced me that we needed one. It looks like most of u are okay with me lurking so I'll probably be doing that yeet

Fanart! Lu's back at it again with [fanart of the Glitter Bombing of L'Manberg](#)! We also got Gacha Life videos by [•×{LonnieGacha18}×•](#) and [mori](#)! And [fanart of blob dreaxter](#) by aivoze :D

### **Loop Notes**

**116.** [Jump In The Cadillac.](#)

**117.** The insanity spreads. Like a virus.

**118.** It's theorized that a modern truth potion could be created through the engineering of a fever of some kind, since sickness tends to leave people too addled to lie. Tommy's truth potion is essentially fever on crack.

# Chapter 25

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

**121.** *the adventures of dreaxter, pt. 7 (credit to Black\_as\_White) ([see previous parts of this loop here](#))*

### ***TW: Implied/Referenced Torture***

Tommy plucked halfheartedly at the weeds, glaring at them like they'd personally offended him. "Build a hotel, they said. It'll be fun, they said." He yanked a dandelion out with unnecessary force. "But noooo, I have to pull the *same fucking weeds a hundred fucking times!*"

"*Tommy,*" an echoey voice said behind him. Tommy groaned, throwing his weeds down and turning around.

"Hey Dream, whhhAT THE FUCK!"

The ghost offered him a wan smile. The vibrant bruises on his cheek scrunched disturbingly. "*Yeah. I got a wardrobe upgrade.*"

"What the *fuck*," Tommy repeated, voice reaching a squeak. "Go back, undo, whatever the fuck just-- no!"

"*I don't know how.*"

Tommy pressed the heels of his hands to his eyes and took a few deep breaths. Then he looked Dream over, forcing himself not to flinch back at the sight of the orange jumpsuit. "Okay," he breathed. "Okay. What happened?"

Dream flickered like a shaky TV signal. When he stabilized, several ugly gashes had opened up along his arm. "*I talked to Sam.*"

"Right, that'll do it." Tommy's eyes drifted to the green blood staining his sleeve. "Are you okay?"

"*It doesn't hurt.*"

Tommy bit the inside of his cheek. "Not what I was asking."

". . . *Yes. No. I don't know.*" Dream twisted his fingers together. Tommy cringed as they cracked loudly. "*Listen, I-- I need to change back. George and Sapnap are waiting for me-- Sam wouldn't talk to them, so they sent me into the prison to find him, but if I don't get back soon-- I can't let them see me like this and I didn't know what to do, so I just--*"

"Went looking for me."

“Yes.”

“Right, okay. Right. Um--” Tommy wracked his brain. “Maybe it’s connected to your emotions or some shit? You gotta calm down, man.”

The ghost scowled at him. The mask pushed to the side of his head cracked, a smear of dark green creeping up the edge. “*I would if I knew how!*”

Tommy was half-tempted to say ‘breathing exercises’, but one look at Dream’s glowing eyes was enough to tell him that they wouldn’t work this time. Instead he said, “I wanna redecorate the prison.”

Dream blinked. “. . .*What?*”

“I wanna redecorate the prison,” Tommy repeated. “Next time we loop in after the final confrontation, we’re taking creative liberties. With or without Sam’s permission.”

“I . . .” Dream frowned. “*What would you do with it?*”

“Make everything pink. Baker-Miller pink. Scientifically proven to reduce aggression, and Sam could use some help with that.” Tommy eyed Dream’s hoodie, which was conspicuously glitter-free. “And add glitter. A ton of that shit, just-- everywhere. Pile it up in the corners so people step in it and get glitter all over themselves.”

Dream’s form stabilized, flickering edges solidifying once more. “*Wouldn’t that just make him more frustrated?*”

“But it would be funny. His *face*, Dream, remember that one time we replaced the lava with glue--”

“*The time with the feathers, or the time with the catnip?*”

“I was thinking about the feathers, but the catnip one was fuckin’ *hilarious*.” Tommy snickered, relaxing slightly as Dream’s fingers straightened out. “Highest-security prison on the server, and it couldn’t hold up against *cats*.”

“*To be fair, they were invincible cats. And motivated by catnip.*”

“But *cats*! It took Technoblade a *month* to put together a plan to get you out, and the cats did it in three hours!”

Dream chuckled. The dark green receded and the gashes stitched themselves up. When Tommy blinked, the ghost was back in his hoodie - slightly ragged, but a massive improvement from the jumpsuit.

“Better?”

“*Better*,” Dream confirmed. He ducked his head. “*Sorry, I didn’t expect. . . I should be over it by now--*”



“Shut the fuck up. You have a right to be mad, so stop worrying about it.” Tommy barreled on before Dream could protest. “You need to head back now, right?”

“*Yeah.*” Dream sent him a wry smile that told him he knew *exactly* what Tommy was doing. “*Mind helping me? I can’t seem to remember how I got here.*”

“Fuck your stupid ghost-amnesia bullshit,” Tommy muttered, but he turned on his heel and strode down the path. “If I somehow end up in the prison *again*, I’m blaming you.”

“*You’ll be fine!*”

---

“--and we’re not leaving until he comes out and talks to us--”

“For the last time, Sapnap!” Bad’s tail lashed back and forth, nearly whacking Antfrost across the knees. “We can’t let you in! There’s no point in waiting out here-- just go home.”

Sapnap bared his teeth, eyes glowing dangerously. “Look, *dad*,” --Bad flinched back-- “I don’t care if Sam sent you guys out to chase us away. We’re not budging until we get some answers.”

“To *what*?” Antfrost demanded. “What could you possibly need to see Sam for?”

“To know why Dream’s *dead*!”

Both guards recoiled. “*Dead*?” Bad echoed, eyes widening. “I-- what? No, Sam would have told us if he. . .”

George crossed his arms. “Well, he obviously didn’t.”

Antfrost shook his head. “Look, even if Dream is dead we can’t let you in. Warden’s orders.”

Sapnap snarled and took a step forward, only to stop in his tracks when a voice rang through the entrance hall. “Uh. . . bad time?”

Tommy stepped into the hall. He winced as four wary gazes fell on him. “I’m just, uh, bringing Dreaxter back.”

As if on cue, the ghost floated into view. He beamed. “*George! Sapnap!*”

Sapnap blinked, ignoring the choked noise Bad made behind him. “Dream, what-- I thought you were looking for Sam?”

“*I was! I found him, actually, and. . .*” the ghost frowned. “*I think I told him you were outside? He wouldn’t go out, so I asked him how I. . . how I. . . don’t. . .*” he shook his head.

*“Anyway, I blinked and I was outside, and I didn’t know where I was or how I got there, but then I saw Tommy far far away--”*

“--so he whined about it until I took him here.” Tommy rolled his eyes. “You’re welcome, by the way.”

Dreaxter beamed and patted Tommy on the head in an almost condescending manner.

*“Thanks, Tommy!”* Tommy scowled and batted his hand away.

“Thanks, Tommy,” George echoed, much more genuine. He turned to the ghost. “Are you okay?”

*“Yeah!”* Dream thrust his hands forward, revealing that they were covered with glitter. It trickled between his fingers like sand in an hourglass, leaving sparkling trails on the floor. *“I even got more glitter!”*

“Dream?”

*“Dreaxter,”* the ghost corrected, turning to Bad. The demon took a step back-- rather comical, seeing as he loomed a good three feet over Dream. *“Hi Bad! How are you?”*

“You’re dead,” the demon said.

*“I am,”* Dream agreed. He held out another fistful of glitter. *“Want some glitter?”*

“You’re--” the trident slipped from Bad’s fingers, clattering to the floor. “You’re a ghost!”

*“Yeeees? I thought you already knew that.”*

“Sam didn’t tell us,” Antfrost murmured. His tail lashed back and forth with sharp, agitated movements. “Why didn’t he tell us?”

“He didn’t tell *anyone*,” Sapnap snapped.

Bad seemed to fold into himself. “Dream, I-- how did. . . how did you die?”

Dream shrugged. *“Don’t remember.”*

“Which is why we’re trying to get in there,” George said. He crossed his arms. “So are you going to let us in?”

Antfrost and Bad exchanged glances, their inner conflict clear. Sapnap took a step forward, opening his mouth to say something when--

“Oi, what the hell is going on here?”

Heads turned towards the entrance of the prison - all except one. Tommy, standing forgotten in the corner, instead looked towards Dream, who was staring at the man standing silhouetted in the gateway.

Quackity scowled back at them, his gold tooth gleaming. “Well? Why the fuck are you all standing around?”

**122.** *cosplay competition, pt. 4 (credit to Smallest)* ([see previous parts of this loop here](#))

***TW: Implied/Referenced Torture***

Quackity took a deep breath as he stepped onto the platform, folding his shaking hands behind his back. His gut churned with a volatile mix of giddiness and disgust. His heart pounded with adrenaline, addicting and revolting. Over a month after the first visit, the feeling hadn’t worn off. It wouldn’t for a while yet.

Sam pulled the lever and retreated silently into the shadows, expression hidden behind his mask. The platform rumbled beneath Quackity’s feet and he forced himself to calm, folding his hands behind his back and painting a more civilized smile across his face.

That was the thing that set him apart from Schlatt. Schlatt didn’t try to hide his madness. Quackity did.

The platform ground to a halt at the edge of the obsidian. Quackity stepped off, idly running a finger over the dull edge of the shears as the netherite barrier came down. Dream lay facedown on the obsidian floor, his features obscured by a mop of dirty blonde hair.

Quackity rolled his eyes. “Dream.”

Dream didn’t respond. Quackity felt his lips pull into a sneer. So this was how he was gonna play it, huh?

“Dream,” he repeated, stalking over to the man. Something niggled at the back of his mind, a strange insistence that something wasn’t quite right with the scene, but he brushed it aside. “Get up.”

Dream groaned. It sounded. . . off, like the pitch wasn’t quite right. Quackity chalked it up to him screaming himself hoarse the day before and nudged the prisoner with the toe of his boot.

“Last chance, Dream. Get up.”

Dream continued to imitate a rock. Quackity rolled his eyes and kicked him in the side with enough force to roll him over. The prisoner’s face came into view, half-obscured by dirty blonde hair.

Quackity’s heart plunged into his stomach. This wasn’t Dream.

“T-Tommy?”

Tommy lay splayed out on the prison floor, dressed in a slightly undersized, bloodied prison jumpsuit. Quackity dropped down next to him, alarm bells going off in his mind. Dream had

escaped. Somehow, he'd gotten out, and replaced himself with Tommy. Sam didn't know yet - *nobody* knew yet. Dream was out there, doing who the fuck knows what, and--

Quackity gritted his teeth, swallowing the rising wave of panic. "Tommy, Tommy, can you hear me?" He reached out to touch Tommy's shoulder. "Tommy?"

Tommy's eyes slid open into thin blue slits. He glared at Quackity.

"M taking a nap, leave me alone."

He proceeded to turn over and snore loudly, leaving a flabbergasted Quackity to gape at his back.

---

Puffy hummed a cheery tune as she strode down the path, kicking her heels against the ground. The sun rippled across the water on either side of her, tossed by a light breeze. Perfect weather for a stroll through the server.

She stepped into the Community House, still humming, only to stop when she spotted the figure at the far end of the building. They were rummaging through the chests, and bore a familiar red-and-white t-shirt.

Puffy beamed. She hadn't seen Tommy since his miraculous resurrection; he'd made a habit of avoiding everyone post-revival. He certainly looked a lot better, which was a relief. Best announce her presence, though, so she didn't accidentally scare him.

"Tommy?"

The person that looked back at her was decidedly *not* Tommy. Sure, his eyes were the right color, but his facial structure was all wrong. Puffy stared. "... *Dream?*"

"Um," Dream squeaked. And when Puffy said *squeak*, she meant that his voice reached Alvin and the Chipmunks level. "Who's Dream?"

Puffy rubbed her eyes, hoping that she'd stop hallucinating. Unfortunately, Dream remained in all his. . . blonde-haired glory. Was he wearing a *wig*?

Dream was still watching her. Puffy exhaled.

"Dream, I. . . how did you break out? Why are you. . ." she waved a hand towards his general person, not quite sure how to verbalize his appearance.

"I'm not Dream--"

"Dream, I've known you for eight years. I've seen your face enough times to know what it looks like."

“Not Dream,” Dream insisted. “I’m uh, NotDream123. You can ask Tommy, he’ll tell you I’m not Dream.”

Puffy blinked. Raised a hand to her face. Took a deep breath.

"I'm going to go to the prison," she told Dream, "And tell Sam that you broke out. And I'm not going to ask you any more questions, because I'm pretty sure I don't want to know."

With that said, she turned on her heel and hurried away. "Broke out of what?" Dream called to her retreating back.

Puffy walked faster.

---

“Well, Quackity thought I was you for a full minute--”

“You just laid on the floor and played dead the entire time! I actually had to talk!”

“At least I fooled Quackity--”

“I fooled Puffy too! And my costumes were more accurate than yours.”

“Right, because you *stole* your costumes-- at least I actually made mine!”

“Not all of us have sewing skills!”

They glared at each other, neither willing to concede. At last, Dream sighed, tugging his blonde wig off.

“. . . Let’s just call it a draw, yeah?”

“Fine,” Tommy sniffed. “But my George cosplay was still better than yours.”

“You *take that back--*”

**123.** *(credit to Sad\_Apparition)*

“Useless piece of shit, I’m gonna burn this entire fucking library to the ground--”

“Any luck?”

Tommy looked up from the book he was tearing apart to glower at Dream. “Does it *look like* I’m having any luck?!”

“No,” Dream admitted. He eyed the shelves of the stronghold library, half of which had been cleared, the books which used to occupy them now lying in various states of disarray on the floor. “Can I ask why you’re destroying that book?”

“It offended me,” Tommy deadpanned. He dropped the mangled book on the floor and kicked it behind the shelves. “Guessing you didn’t find anything either?”

“Nope.”

Tommy groaned, burying his head in his hands. “Look man, this is the-- what, sixty-something-eth stronghold we’ve found? We’ve only gotten vaguely time loop-related shit from like, seven of them, and none of it’s been helpful. Can’t we just stop going through libraries?”

“It’s not like we’re actively looking for strongholds anymore, and if there’s a chance, it’s--”

“--worth a shot, yeah, yeah.”

Dream snorted, meandering over to peer at a neat stack of books, a contrast to their brethren strewn across the room. “What’s this?”

“Stuff that’s kinda time or dimension travel related,” Tommy said. “Mostly fiction, from what I can tell.”

“So the usual.” Dream swiped the book at the top of the pile, leafing through the pages. “Hey, this one has pictures!”

“Oh yeah, that one’s a kid’s book. I think.” Tommy peered over his shoulder. “The art’s cool, but the aliens are fucking *weird*.”

“Weird, but their colors are pretty.” Dream squinted at the runes inscribed on the yellowed pages. “And so. . . the five young Te. . . Temp. . . this calligraphy is hard to read. What rune is that?”

“Dunno.”

Dream huffed. “And so the five young Temp-somethings left their. . . homes, ready to ex. . . explode--? No, no, *explore*. That’s *reid*. Explore the worlds.” He side-eyed Tommy. “How is this related to time travel?”

“Dimension travel,” Tommy corrected. “They go to like, three different universes and fuck shit up. Then they all end up dying because they were stupid. Except for one guy, he survives ‘cause he stayed out of things.”

Dream slowly shut the book. “. . . I thought you said this was for kids?”

Tommy shrugged. “It is. Teaches them things, ey? Don’t get involved, and you won’t die.”

“Huh.” Dream set the book down on the pile. “So if we just run away every loop--”

“We’ve already tried that, didn’t do shit.” Tommy crossed his arms. “And we’re not following a fuckin’ *children’s book*. They’re not even humans, and we’re not trying to not die here, we’re trying to get out of a fucking time loop.”

Dream raised his hands. “Just saying.”

A moody silence descended upon the room. Tommy glared at the remaining shelves, gnawing on the inside of his cheek.

“The rest of these are probably useless,” he grumbled. “We’d be better off doing something else.”

“Like?”

“... I was thinking--”

“You do that?”

Tommy flipped him off. “You know how Connor told us that there was another time traveler, like, five loops ago?”

“Yes?”

“They obviously didn’t wanna be found, but they might’ve been scared of us or some shit. I was thinking, if we-- y’know, tried looking for them again, we could do it in a... less serious way?”

Dream straightened, interest piqued. “Got anything in mind?”

---

Technoblade woke up to pounding at his door and screaming in his head.

“What?” he muttered, rolling out of his bed and making the arduous journey down the ladder in darkness. The voices were unhelpful as always, providing exactly no information about whatever might be waiting outside his house now. They weren’t screaming for blood, though, so it probably wasn’t a threat.

He was about five rungs off the ground when the knocking began anew, this time with much more force. This was then followed by an ear-splitting “*FBI, OPEN UP!*”

Technoblade promptly fell the rest of the way down the ladder. “Ow,” he groaned, pushing himself to his feet. He didn’t think anyone was dumb enough to actually impersonate the FBI (which was liable to get you imprisoned, if authorities in the North America server ever got wind of it), so this was probably a prank of some kind. One he would have gladly ignored, if not for the voices cackling in his head and the fact that *he would like to sleep, thank you very much*.

He hobbled over to the door and slammed it open. “*What,*” he ground out. Then he paused and did a double-take.

Dream and Tommy stood illuminated in the dim starlight, dressed in. . . surprisingly realistic FBI costumes. Technoblade had no idea where they even found the references for an FBI costume in a server that was far removed from most kinds of internet, but they were decent reproductions.

What was *not* a decent reproduction was the loaded crossbows that they wielded. Though guns weren’t produced on this server, so he guessed that they had to improvise.

“Hello,” Dream said, in a pleasant tone of voice that completely belied the shouting and attempts to break his door down that Technoblade had experienced literally a minute ago. “We are the Federal Bureau of Investigation into Temporal Anomalies. We would like to inquire as to any experiences you have had with time travelers?”

“What?” Technoblade asked blankly.

Dream’s crossbow disappeared in a flash of light, replaced with a pen and notepad. “We would like to inquire as to any experiences you’ve had with time travelers.”

“Time travelers,” Technoblade repeated. Part of him wanted to question this charade, but the rest of him was so tired that he was willing to go along with this so he could *go back to sleep*. Actually, he was about eighty percent sure that he was still asleep, and this was some amalgamation of a fever dream his sleep-deprived brain had conjured up. He *knew* he shouldn’t have drunk the suspicious soup Phil made. “Uh. . . can’t say I’ve had any.”

“I see.” Dream clicked his pen a few times (wait a second, that was a quill, how was he clicking a quill--?) and scribbled something down in his notepad. “Then can you tell me about any strange experiences with suspected time traveler Ranboo Beloved?”

“Ranboo? You think-- you think that guy is a time traveler?”

“I’m sorry, that information is classified.”

Technoblade took a deep, deep breath. “No, I haven’t had any weird time-travel-esque experiences with Ranboo, and no, I don’t think he’s a time traveler. Can I ask what you’re doing?”

“That information is also classified.” Dream clicked his. . . quill. . . a couple more times. Technoblade stared at it, eye twitching. If that wasn’t confirmation that he was dreaming, then he wasn’t sure what was.

Still, he was tired. The voices were being annoying. He was getting cold, standing in the doorway to the arctic in nothing but his pajamas.

“Can I go back to sleep now?”

Dream and Tommy glanced at each other, nodded, and looked back at him in sync. It was kinda creepy, actually. “Thank you for your cooperation.”



---

Technoblade jerked awake, staring up at the wooden ceiling. He lay there for a moment, mind puzzling over the fuzzy recollections he had of his dreams.

His dreams, which had felt. . . oddly realistic.

Technoblade sat up. “Chat,” he said aloud. “Was I dreaming?”

No, Chat answered with unwarranted glee.

“Hm,” Technoblade said. He got up, got dressed, and promptly headed over to Phil’s house to ask if he’d put any hallucinogens in the soup last night.

**124.** *remix, pt. 7* ([see previous parts of this loop here](#))

***TW: Implied/Referenced Abuse***

Tubbo took a deep breath. He donned his presidential mask, forcing his shoulders to straighten as he strode forward. Quackity sent him a sidelong glance but didn’t comment.

The L’Mantree soon came into view, and with it, a very familiar figure.

“Tommy!”

Tommy turned around. The smiley mask had been pushed to one side of his head, revealing his bright grin. “Tubbo! Big man, how are you?”

Tubbo felt himself relax. Tommy was acting more like he used to, before the whole Dream debacle. Maybe he’d just been having an off day, with Dream’s disappearance and everything. “I’m. . . things have been okay.”

“Great, great. And big Q!” Tommy beamed at Quackity. “Haven’t seen you in a while!”

He held out his hand. Quackity clasped it in a handshake, grinning back. “Good to see you too, Tommy. How’s the freedom?”

Tommy blinked. “Huh?”

“From office,” Quackity clarified. He mock-shuddered. “Fuck, if I’d known there was gonna be that much paperwork. . .”

Tommy cackled. “Power and responsibility, big Q. Power and responsibility.” He took a step back, crossing his arms. “So you guys said you knew something about Dream?”

The mood plummeted. Quackity and Tubbo glanced at each other, before Quackity reluctantly stepped back. Tubbo took the lead.

“Yeah, uh. . . I ran into him this morning--”

And then Tommy was *right in front of him*, eyes burning with something dark and excited, an unsettling smile carved across his face. “You found him?!”

Tubbo jerked backwards, his heart pounding in his ears. An unreadable expression flashed across Tommy’s face before his countenance rearranged itself into an easy grin. “Sorry,” he said. “You said you found him?”

“More like he found me,” Tubbo answered. He took a few discreet breaths, willing his heart to slow. He wasn’t scared. This was *Tommy*, for Prime’s sake. “He, uh. . . said some things.”

Tommy snorted. “What, did he monologue about his evil plans for world domination or something?”

“No, uh. . .” Tubbo bit the inside of his cheek. There wasn’t really a way to tiptoe around this, so. . . “He said you blackmailed him into exiling himself.”

Tommy blinked. “Huh?”

The confusion was a good sign. Tubbo’s fingers loosened from their tight grip behind his back. “He said you, uh, threatened to hurt George and Sapnap if he didn’t give up. That you blackmailed him.”

Tommy hesitated. “Well. . . I wouldn’t call it *blackmail*.”

Tubbo’s budding hope withered and died. “. . . What?”

Tommy shrugged. “I didn’t blackmail him. I just nudged him in the right direction, yeah?”

Quackity had gone still beside him. Tubbo very deliberately kept his gaze fixed on Tommy. “So you wrote the message on the. . . picture?”

“We talked before the trial about some stuff. I was just making sure he didn’t forget it.” Tommy’s mouth thinned into a neutral line, and the look in his eyes was so *cold* that Tubbo felt a chill go down his spine. “Is that gonna be a problem, Tubbo?”

“I. . . it’s, um, it’s not. . .”

“What did you talk about?” Quackity cut in, his voice flat. “George and Sapnap?”

If anything, Tommy’s gaze grew even colder. “Look, big Q, I came here because you said you had intel on Dream-- not so you could interrogate me.”

“Dream said--”

"I don't care what Dream said. Whatever shit he's feeding you, don't believe it." Something cracked at the edge of Tommy's smile. "He's just looking for *attention*."

Tubbo frowned. The words felt familiar. He'd heard them before, but not from Tommy. Not from Quackity either. Who--?

Oh.

*(Tommy laughed, shaking Tubbo's hand off his arm. Tubbo narrowed his eyes, grabbing Tommy's hand again. "I saw it," he insisted. "Tommy, you don't need to hide--")*

*"Not hiding anything," Tommy said. He tried to tug his arm away again, but Tubbo maintained a firm grip. Ignoring Tommy's protests, he reached out and pulled the green bandanna away.*

*A bracelet of red bruises circled Tommy's wrist. Tubbo traced them with his eyes, pulling up a mental comparison with the one around his own bicep and the one currently decorating Quackity's face.*

*A handprint.*

*"... He was just roughhousing," Tommy said. "He forgets how strong he is."*

*Tubbo swallowed bile. "Wilbur's supposed to be better."*

*"Better?"*

*Better than Schlatt, Tubbo wanted to say. But before he could speak, the door slammed open. Both boys looked up to see Wilbur in the doorway, his eyes fixed on Tommy's wrist.*

*"Ah, Tommy!" His gaze flicked up again. Dismissive. Like he hadn't made a fucking bruise on Tommy's arm. "Just the man I needed!"*

*"Wilbur," Tubbo started, but Wilbur held up a hand.*

*"Ah-ah," he tutted. "I need to talk to Tommy. Alone."*

*Tubbo could feel his teeth grinding together. "Wilbur, Tommy's arm-- he said--"*

*Wilbur snorted. "Don't listen to what the gremlin says. He's just looking for attention."*

*"Fuck you," Tommy protested, but there was no heat to it. He sent Tubbo a half-hearted wave. "It's fine, Tubbo. Go uh, file Schlatt's tax returns or some shit. I got big man plans to make with Wilbur."*

*Tubbo shifted, uncertain, but Wilbur was watching him with mistrustful eyes and Tommy was pleading for him to go--*

*So he left.*

*They never brought the incident up again.)*

Tubbo stared at Tommy. Tommy raised his chin, the ice in his eyes cracking apart to reveal burning, fiery *rage*.

Tubbo was going to be sick. “Tommy,” he whispered. “Tommy, did you-- are you--”

“Tubbo!” A distant cry caught their attention. Fundy barreled down the path towards them, skidding to a stop just shy of running into Quackity. “Tubbo,” he panted. “Technoblade’s in L’Manberg!”

Quackity cursed, reaching for his inventory. “Where?”

“Philza! He’s-- he was heading towards Phil’s house, I don’t think he saw me. Dream’s with him--” his gaze landed on Tommy. “--T-Tommy?”

A slow, dangerous smile spread across Tommy's face. “Dream’s in L’Manberg, huh? With Philza?”

“Don’t,” Tubbo blurted.

Tommy sneered at him before he pulled the mask over his face. With a careless wave and the sound of a shattering enderpearl, he was gone.

## **125.**

Fundy kicked the lever, eye twitching. “Work, dammit.”

The contraption failed to light up. Fundy narrowed his eyes at the circuits, crouching and running a finger across the redstone. “Not disconnected, hmm. . .”

“AHA!”

Fundy shrieked, leaping to his feet. Dream, who had popped out of fucking *nowhere*, beamed down at him. The man was sporting an eye-searing outfit combination of pink shirt and orange pants. Actually, wait, the pants looked a bit like the bottom half of his jumpsuit-- wasn’t he supposed to be in prison?!

“Good thinking, Boots!” Dream declared. “You were right! Swiper was right here!”

Fundy whipped around to see Tommy, who looked normal - save for his red rainboots and his wide-eyed, manic grin.

“Wh-- Tommy?” Fundy glanced back and forth between the two. “Why is-- why is Dream out of prison? What are you doing with him?”

“Say it with me!” Dream chirped.

“What the fu--” Fundy started, only to be hit with a rolled-up piece of paper.

“Hey, this is a kid’s show,” Tommy hissed in his normal voice. “Watch your language.”

Fundy peeled the paper off his face. “But you curse all the t--”

“We’ve got to stop him!” Dream shouted over him. “Say it with us! Swiper, no swiping! Swiper, no swiping!”

“Fine, okay, f-- *agh!* Fork! Yes! I’ll stop stealing your sh-- *stuff*-- will you stop hitting me with that?!” Fundy snatched the paper from Dream, then stared at it. “Why the fuck does this have googly eyes?”

“Oh no! Swiper has swiped the map!”

“The m--?” Fundy unrolled the paper to find a poorly-drawn map of the Dream SMP. “What the fuck.”

Actually, ‘poorly drawn’ was too generous. It was sketched with the ugliest crayon color he had ever seen. The labels were horribly misspelled. “L’Menbargo” had been downgraded to a shapeless blob.

“Not the map!” Tommy cried. “We’ve got to get it back! We can’t go anywhere without it!”

Fundy’s eye twitched. “You’re telling me *this*--” he jabbed a finger at the monstrosity, “--is supposed to be an actual map?”

Both lunatics ignored him. Dream turned to what appeared to be empty air. “Swiper’s hidden it!”

“It’s literally right here--”

“Quick, do you see the map?”

“Who the fuck are you even talking to?!”

Dream paused. “. . .Where?”

Fundy strained his ears, trying to pick out another voice. Nothing answered him except the wind.

“That’s right!” Dream cheered. He swiped the ‘map’ from Fundy’s hands. “Hooray! We’ve gotten the map back!”

“Hooray!” Tommy sang.

Fundy decided that he’d reached his limit for craziness for the day, spun on his heel, and speed-walked away. If Sam wanted to drag Dream back into prison, he could deal with the insanity himself. Fundy wasn’t touching that mess with a 20-foot pole.

## Chapter End Notes

Enter [Abyss of Chaos]?

[{YES}](#).

[{NO}](#).

### **Loop Notes**

**123.** The two loopers spent the rest of the loop either knocking down people's doors at 2 AM or lurking ominously in the background, scribbling who-knows-what in their notepads. Whenever approached or confronted, they would whip out newspapers and pretend to read them. Said newspapers were often upside down and/or in another language.

**124.** I literally searched up "villain tommy" fanart to get the vibes for this.

**125.** Du-du-du-du-du-Dora! Du-du-du-du-du-Dora! Dora, Dora, Dora the Explorerrrrr~!

# Chapter 26

## Chapter Notes

What you signed up for: crack

What you get instead: fluff, humor, crackish humor, a LONG action scene, And Then There Was Angst

I had exams every day this week and i'm sorry but i Cannot Do This rn besties

### **Spotlighted Comments**

**Lyrmony:** The dark side took sunshine boi and gave him cereal no milk, so now he's on his villain arc.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

**126.**

“TUBBO!” Tommy’s voice echoed through the mansion, frantic and borderline terrified.

“TUBBO, HELP!”

Tubbo dropped the trinket he’d been tinkering with. “TOMMY!” he screamed, ripping an axe from his inventory and dashing into the hall. “WHERE ARE YOU?!”

“IN HERE!”

Tubbo skidded to a stop in front of the guest room, heart thundering in his ears. He slammed the door open, half-expecting to see blood.

He was met instead with the sight of a wide-eyed Tommy, standing stiff and stock-still in the middle of the room. “Help,” he begged.

Tubbo raked his gaze over Tommy. He didn’t seem to be injured, there wasn’t anything obvious causing him distress, so what--

Oh.

Tubbo let his axe dispel in a flash of light. “Tommy, you-- I thought you were in danger!”

“I *am* in danger,” Tommy protested. “There’s a *small child* clinging to my leg, Tubbo, do you not see him--”

Tubbo relaxed as the last dregs of adrenaline drained away. “Michael’s not going to hurt you.”

“I might hurt him!” Tommy was practically *vibrating* with nervousness. “And I can’t move until he gets off because I might kick him!”

Tubbo snorted. “He does it to Ranboo all the time. He won’t get hurt.”

“Tubboooooo,” Tommy whined. Tubbo let out an exasperated sigh.

“Michael, let go of your uncle.”

Michael blinked up at him and chuffed. He did not release his death grip on Tommy’s leg.

Tubbo couldn’t help the grin that tugged at his lips. “Sorry Tommy, his English isn’t the best.” He turned and began moving out of the room. “He’ll eventually detach himself. Just do the best you can.”

“Wh-- Tubbo, I can’t do sh-- anything with him on my leg!”

“You can still walk, you’ll be fine. Ask Boo for tips if you need more help.”

“TUBBO!”

## 127.

His communicator buzzed. Dream pulled it out, catching Tommy’s name as it flashed across the screen. “Sorry,” he told George. “I have to take this.”

George shrugged, turning away. Dream hurried out of hearing distance before he pressed the communicator to his ear. “What?”

*“Dream, I’ve made a mistake.”*

Dream closed his eyes. “. . . What did you do this time?”

Tommy let out a nervous laugh. *“So, uh, I may or may not have turned Fundy into a kid.”*

“Okay? Just give him milk.”

*“I can’t. . . really do that.”*

Deep breaths. Deep, deep breaths. He was the epitome of calm. “And *why* can’t you do that?”

*“Haha, uh, um, Sapnap and Punz were there and they might have kidnapped him?”*

Dream took a moment to parse that out. Then he took another moment to check that his internal screaming hadn’t upgraded to external screaming. Thankfully, it hadn’t. Yet.

“Tommy.”

*“I knooooow,”* Tommy groaned. *“Just like-- bring him back, yeah? I’ll fix it--”*



“*Tommy,*” Dream growled.

“*Whoops Wil’s calling me! Just send Fundy back, great thanks bye!*”

His communicator beeped, signifying that the call had ended. Dream stared blankly ahead and questioned all of his life choices.

---

“Sapnap. Punz. Why do you have a child?”

“Hi!” The aforementioned child beamed up at him with a smile bright and sparkly enough to outshine Tommy on drugs. Dream *twitched*. “I’m Fundy!”

“He’s Fundy,” Sapnap added unnecessarily. Punz hoisted Fundy a little higher up from where he was dangling by the back of his now-oversized shirt.

Dream took a deep breath. “Okay, first of all just-- put him. Down. Put him on the ground before you drop him.”

Punz sheepishly complied, gently lowering Fundy to the ground. The fox hybrid proceeded to sit down on the grass and stare up at all of them with wide eyes.

“Did you guys *kidnap Fundy*?” George asked incredulously. “Why the fuck is he a-- a *child*?”

“No idea,” Punz admitted. “Tommy dropped a potion on him, I think, but I’ve never seen a potion do that before.”

Dream removed his mask so he could pinch the bridge of his nose. “Why did you take him?”

Sapnap and Punz glanced at each other. “. . . Information?”

“Right, and--” Dream glanced at the six-year-old headache that had somehow acquired George’s goggles and was now folding and unfolding them with fascination. “--*how* exactly is he supposed to know anything?”

“Look, it was a heat-of-the-moment kind of thing, okay?”

“Then *take him back.*”

“But we went through all this trouble to get him!”

Dream dragged a hand down his face. “I need a vacation,” he muttered. “Okay, fine, ask him a couple questions if you want. We’re sending him back afterwards.”

“Right, kid--” Sapnap crouched down next to Fundy and offered him a sharp smile. “We need to know your dad’s weaknesses.”

Fundy blinked at him. “Why?”

“Because. . . because, uh. . .”

“We’re going to play a prank on him,” Punz said. “Nothing too serious.”

Sapnap jabbed a thumb in Punz’s direction. “What he said.”

“Oh, okay!” Fundy beamed. “His weakness, right? Um, if you stab him, he gets hurt.”

Dead silence.

“I mean, he’s not wrong?” George’s statement sounded more like a question. Dream disguised his laugh as a cough. Punz turned away, shoulders shaking.

Sapnap’s eye twitched, but his smile stayed steady. “Does he have any other weaknesses?”

Fundy thought harder, his face scrunching up. “Mmm. . . ah! If you shoot him, he also gets hurt!” He folded his arms over his chest, looking very pleased with himself.

Dream’s coughing turned into full-blown wheezing. Sapnap not-so-subtly kicked him in the shin. “*Anything else?*” he ground out.

“Well, if you punch him--”

Sapnap buried his face in his hands. “Just take him back.”

Punz, smirking widely, stepped forward to comply.

## **128.** (*credit to Starshifting (Star) and ThisIsEmius (deci)*)

Sam shifted, subtly trying to stretch out an ache in his back. “Um. . . Tommy, are you done?”

“Almost,” Tommy said. He narrowed his eyes at Sam and jabbed his green-tipped paintbrush at him. “Hold *still*, I can see you shuffling.”

Sam sighed, resigning himself to back pain for the rest of the day. In truth, it was a small price to pay to see Tommy’s joy as he slashed his brush across the canvas. It had been a long time since he’d seen Tommy so happy.

“Done!” Tommy spun the canvas around, beaming. “Whaddya think?”

Sam stared at the painting he’d sacrificed fifteen minutes and his spine for. Said painting displayed a green stick man, captioned “BITCH” in neon red.

Tommy patted the canvas affectionately. “My proudest work so far, I think. Really captures your likeness.”

Sam wasn’t sure whether to laugh or cry. Maybe a bit of both. “Tommy--”

Tommy held out his hand. “And that’ll be sixty diamonds for this amazing portrait, Sam, pay up!”

“I--”

“Can’t pay?” Tommy gasped in mock horror. “Too bad, people who don’t pay get glitter!”

Sam paused. “Glitter?”

“Glitter,” Tommy confirmed, right before he chucked a glitter bomb at Sam’s feet and ran like hell.

---

Quackity grunted, sliding his foot an inch to the left so there was less pressure on his ankle. “How much-- longer are you going to make me-- stay in this pose?”

“Not much longer,” Dream replied absently, his brush whizzing across the paper.

“You can do it, Q!” Karl cheered from the sidelines. “I believe in you!”

Quackity narrowed his eyes at him-- or, as best as he could without turning his head. “Are you *sure* this looks cool? Because I feel fuckin’ *stupid*.”

“You always look cool!”

“Yeah,” Sapnap snickered from his position behind Dream. He not-so-subtly raised his communicator and snapped a picture. “*Really* cool.”

Quackity’s eyes narrowed further. “. . . Sapnap--”

“Done!” Dream turned his canvas around. “So what do you think?”

“Thank Prime,” Quackity muttered, dropping the pose. He rubbed his aching neck as he staggered over, squinting at the painting.

Rather than Quackity’s portrait, the canvas displayed an alarmingly detailed depiction of a hand with the middle finger raised. “*~fuck you~*” curled across the top in sparkly green calligraphy.

“It’s perfect,” Sapnap said, sounding like he was trying very hard not to laugh.

Quackity jabbed an accusatory finger at Dream. “You made me go through fifteen different poses for nothing!”

“I mean, it was for a reason, just not the one you were thinking,” Karl offered. He squinted at the painting. “. . . You know, he actually does draw decent hands.”

“Betrayed by my own fiances,” Quackity lamented, though there was no heat in his voice. “I’m never going to recover from this--”

Sapnap punched him in the shoulder. “Stop being a drama queen,” he ordered, then slung an arm over Quackity’s shoulders and turned to Dream. “So how much for the painting?”

Dream grinned. “Hang it up in your house and I’ll give it to you for free.”

“Deal.”

“Sapnap,” Quackity complained. He was ignored.

“I think it’s a great deal!” Karl chirped. He pulled the painting off the easel with some difficulty, then held it up so the other two could see it better. “Look, this’ll go great with the couch!”

“We’re not hanging that above the couch--”

“Oh, we definitely are.” Sapnap offered Dream a sharp-toothed smirk as he grabbed Quackity by the shoulders and steered him away. “Pleasure doing business with you, Dream. If you get any more blackmail on Quackity, feel free to call!”

“I hate you,” Quackity realized. “I actually hate all of you.”

“Aw Q!” Karl maneuvered one arm around the painting so he could pat Quackity on the head. “We love you too!”

**129. remix, pt. 8** (*inspired by ProcrastinatingMilk*) ([see previous parts of this loop here](#))

“I already told you, I can get Phil out on my own--”

“Like how you faced the butcher army on your own?”

Technoblade sighed. “You were going to collapse two hours ago--”

“I drank a strength potion and got better.” Dream frowned at him. “We’ve had this conversation, we’re already here, there’s no point in arguing.”

Technoblade muttered something under his breath before falling silent.

They skirted around the houses, finally reaching the edge of the main plaza. Technoblade stopped short at the sight of the anvil hanging high over the cage, something that seemed out

of place in the otherwise picturesque nation. “What is that?”

Dream shrugged, catching a flash of orange in the corner of his vision. Weighing the pros and cons, he decided not to say anything. They’d agreed that the only scripted thing about this loop would be his story from Exile, so if Fundy ran off to alert the Butcher Army. . . or Tommy. . . it would make things interesting.

Technoblade hadn’t seen the fox hybrid, too caught up in staring at the platform looming over them. “What *is* this?” he repeated.

“Execution platform,” Dream answered, scenes of golden light flashing through his mind. He’d seen Technoblade’s execution over twenty times by now. “Probably for you.”

Technoblade’s hands tightened into fists. “‘Fair trial’,” he muttered, then whipped around and marched towards Philza’s house. “Let’s get out of here.”

Dream sent one last glance towards where Fundy had been hiding, then followed.

---

“The catacombs?” Technoblade asked. He took the bundle of items Philza shoved in his direction and began shuffling them into the bags sitting on the floor. “What are those?”

“Mineshafts,” Philza answered, his gaze sweeping across the room. “Beneath my house. We can use them to escape.”

Dream straightened up from where he had been rummaging through a chest, holding aloft a bundle of what appeared to be letters. “Phil, did you want to take this too?”

“I knew I was forgetting something!” Philza swept the papers from Dream’s hands and hurried over to Technoblade. Technoblade took them, brow crinkling.

“Are these--”

“From her, yeah.”

Technoblade handed the letters back. “Keep them in your inventory. They might get damaged in the bags.”

“Who--?” Dream started, only to be cut off by a noise outside.

The muffled sound of an enderpearl shattering set them all on high alert. A moment later, heavy footsteps sounded on the stairs.

Philza was already moving, sweeping the bags out of view before heading towards the door. Technoblade and Dream slipped into the bedroom and shut the door.

Technoblade pried the closet open. “Get in,” he whispered, but Dream shook his head.

“We won't both fit in there. I'll get an invis and hide under the bed--”

A door slammed outside, followed by the crash of breaking glass. Philza's voice went silent. Technoblade's head whipped around, but before he could do anything, Dream shoved him into the closet and shut the door. Dream then dove for the bed, wedging himself underneath it while fumbling with his inventory. His fingers closed around a bottle and he yanked it out, struggling to pop the cork with one hand. His elbow whacked against the bedframe. He hissed and the bottle dropped from hand, rolling across the floor and clinking to a stop against the wall below the windowsill.

The bedroom door slammed open. Dream heard Philza make a sound of protest.

“I know you're in here,” Tommy murmured. Dream watched his boots as they clomped into the room, mentally calculating if he could drink an invisibility potion. Tommy was currently facing away from him, but if he pulled something from his inventory, he'd *definitely* see the flash of light. He just had to lay here and pray he didn't get caught.

Tommy paused beside the window-- and the discarded invisibility potion laying under it. Then he turned and ambled over to the bed. His boots stopped a mere foot away from Dream's hand. Dream stared at them, holding his breath.

A smiley mask lowered into his range of vision, underscored by a smile full of teeth. “Found you.”

A hand closed around his arm, dragging him out from beneath the bed. Dream summoned his sword and slashed at Tommy, but the teenager grabbed his wrist and *twisted*. Dream cursed as his weapon slipped from his fingers, and Tommy laughed, victorious, right before Technoblade barreled into him. The piglin hybrid ripped them apart, all but hurling Tommy away. The teenager crashed into the far wall, drawing his sword just in time to block Technoblade's. He ducked and *pushed*, forcing Technoblade back, then lunged for Dream.

Technoblade intercepted him, eyes burning. He knocked Tommy away with a well-timed kick. “Go,” he ordered.

“Where?” Dream retorted, glancing back at Tommy, who had staggered to his feet. “He's in the door--”

Technoblade shattered the glass window with one strike of his elbow and shoved Dream out of it. Dream didn't even have time to scream. He hit the ground, rolled wrong, and came up with protesting ribs and a twisted ankle. Stumbling to his feet, he was barely five feet away when Tommy landed where he'd been, sword drawn.

“Come here!” Tommy screamed.

“Fuck no,” Dream retorted, pulling out the last weapon in his inventory - a crossbow - and pointed it at Tommy's face. “One more step and I'll shoot.”

Tommy opened his mouth to respond, then leapt aside, narrowly dodging Technoblade's attack. The piglin hybrid didn't bat an eye, reversing the downstroke into a swipe that would have taken Tommy's head off if he hadn't ducked. Tommy met Technoblade head on, striking back with a ferocity and skill that seemed to catch his opponent off guard. Now that they were out of close quarters, they were both free to fight at their full capacity. Technoblade was one of the best fighters on the server, yes, but Tommy had over two centuries' worth of experience under his belt. In fact, the only reason he hadn't yet overwhelmed Technoblade was the fact that physical changes didn't transfer across loops.

Dream kept his crossbow aimed at the fight, but he couldn't get a clear shot in. Technoblade caught his eye and jerked his head back towards the house, then turned to parry one of Tommy's swings. "Go get Phil!" he shouted. Dream hesitated for a moment, then turned tail and hobbled towards Philza's house as fast as he could.

The door swung away from the splintered frame with a light touch, revealing the man lying prone on the floor. Dream rushed over, ignoring his protesting ankle, and dropped down next to him. "Philza!"

Philza glared up at him, fury dissolving into relief when he saw Dream. He made a sound as though he was trying to speak, but his jaw remained firmly shut. Dream glanced at his quivering wings.

"You can't move," he realized.

Philza made an affirmative noise.

"Is there any way you can show me where the secret tunnel is?"

Philza hesitated. That in itself was answer enough.

"Fuck. Okay." Dream glanced towards the door, then back to Philza. "Techno's fighting Tommy outside-- I'll grab our stuff and try to carry you out, does that work?"

Another affirmative. Dream grabbed the bags from where they'd been stashed behind some chests, then began the arduous task of transporting Philza.

Trying to sit him up was like trying to move a marble statue. Dream quickly realized that the man's muscles were quite literally locked in place; trying to pull him up forced the rest of him off the floor. Kind of like a cardboard cutout-- which was very inconvenient. Dream was running on the two Strength potions he'd drunk an hour earlier, his ribs and ankle were aching, and he couldn't even use a Healing because potion overdose was *not* on his agenda. He could barely move Philza in this state, much less lift him.

"I'll have to drag you," he told Philza. Philza, understandably, looked very displeased by this, but they didn't have a better choice.

And so Dream found himself trying to maneuver Philza down the stairs without breaking anything. The wings made it a bit difficult (*fuck* they were heavy), and Dream winced every time Philza's feet dropped from one step to the next (better his feet than his head, but *still*).

He breathed a sigh of relief as they reached the ground, pausing to catch his breath. Dream could almost hear Tommy making jokes about Philza's age in the back of his head.

Speaking of Tommy--

Dream took a moment to survey the fight. Technoblade appeared to be on the offensive, though every time he tried to pull away, Tommy would be right on him. Techno was gaining ground, however, driving Tommy back.

No, wait. Tommy was *letting* himself get driven back. Back, towards the execution platform.

"Technoblade!"

Technoblade's head whipped around. When he spotted Dream and Philza, he redoubled his efforts to beat Tommy down. Tommy fell back under the renewed onslaught, backing up until he and Technoblade were fighting on the steps of the platform.

"He's trying to get you to the cage!" Dream shouted. Technoblade immediately tried to disengage, but Tommy grabbed his arm and spun him around onto the platform, raising a glass bottle above his head.

Dream's blood turned to ice. "Above!" he screamed, but the warning came too late. A cloud of gray smoke engulfed Technoblade, and almost instantly, his movements stilled.

"Paralysis," Tommy huffed, panting with the exertion of the fight. Despite this, his voice carried across the plaza. "A bit like upgraded slowness. I'm pretty proud of it."

Dream hesitated, glancing down at Philza. Should he make a run for it? If he did though, Technoblade would be at L'Manberg's mercy. And Prime knew they didn't have a lot of it.

The decision was taken out of his hands when Tommy straightened, ambling over to Technoblade. He wrenched the blade from Technoblade's frozen fingers and tapped the flat of it against his shoulder. "Now, Dream-- come here or Techno dies." He tilted his head. "This is what you like, right? Using leverage?"

Dream didn't move, his heart in his throat. "You-- can't," he protested. "That's not. . ."

Tommy slid the sword an inch closer to Technoblade's neck.

Carefully, Dream lowered Philza to the ground and raised his hands. He approached the platform as steadily as he could, ignoring the throbbing in his ankle. Technoblade glowered as he approached, likely wondering what the *fuck* he was doing.

To be honest, Dream had no idea. They hadn't planned to get this many people involved, and things were spiraling out of control. Tommy hadn't shown any sign of hesitation, though, and if he wanted to drop the idea, he'd say something. Dream trusted his judgment. If Tommy was going to continue, he'd follow his lead.

So he took a deep breath and shuffled up the steps, stopping in front of Tommy. "You got me. Now step away from Techno."



Tommy paused, as though considering something. “. . . Drop your stuff.”

Dream went still. “That’s. . . some of it isn’t mine,” he protested. “You can’t burn Philza’s--”

“Drop your stuff,” Tommy repeated. He adjusted his grip on the sword. Dream glanced at it, then began laying his items on the ground - starting with Philza's bags. When his inventory was empty, he began stripping his armor off. The last thing to land in the pile was the heavy cloak Technoblade had given him, especially suited for the arctic temperatures they lived in. He felt cold without it.

“That’s everything,” he said quietly.

Tommy jerked his head towards the cage. “Get in.”

Dream stepped in. The gate slammed shut. Tommy lowered the sword from Technoblade’s throat. “See? That wasn’t so hard, huh?”

Dream remained silent, his eyes darting towards Philza. The avian hybrid was still lying on the ground of the plaza, but had managed to bring up a crossbow with one shaking hand.

Tommy followed his gaze and clicked his tongue. He laid a hand on the lever. “Act up, and he gets crushed,” he called.

Philza had regained enough control over his facial muscles to assume a mimicry of a scowl. He lowered the weapon.

Tommy glanced back at Dream and tilted his head. Dream nodded back, just slight enough that it could be passed off as a dip of the chin. He had three lives, losing one wasn’t going to matter much in the grand scheme of things.

Tommy relaxed slightly, leaning almost *casually* against the lever. “So, Dream. Why’d you run away?”

Before Dream could answer, a voice rang across the plaza. “Tommy, what are you doing?”

“Tubbo!” Tommy turned around, one arm sweeping out in a welcome. His other one remained firmly on the lever. “Quackity, Fundy-- you’re just in time!”

“For what?” Tubbo demanded. “What are you doing?”

Tommy shrugged, cocking his head towards the anvil looming above them. “You set this up for Techno and Dream, yeah? I caught ‘em for you.”

Tubbo grimaced. “We weren’t going to use it.”

“Why not?” Tommy tapped his fingers on the lever and Technoblade growled, low and furious, in the back of his throat. “I mean, we have Dream right where we want him, ey? I’m just asking him a few questions.”

“And then what?”

“Well, that depends on him.” Tommy jerked his chin towards Dream. “He can choose to return to exile, or he can be stubborn.”

Tubbo stared at him. “. . . You promised you wouldn’t be the next Wilbur.”

“Tubbo, what the fuck are you talking about? I’m not Wilbur. I’m not Schlatt. I’m not even Dream, Tubbo, don’t you see? Don’t you get it?” Tommy smiled, wide and bright. “I’m me. Just Tommy. Nobody’s pulling my strings anymore, and fuck, it’s *amazing*.”

Quackity shifted, eyes darting to the cage. “Tommy, man, this isn’t you.”

Tommy laughed. “Oh c’mon big Q, you know why I’m doing this.” He swept an arm out towards Dream. “He started this. I’m just giving him a taste of his own medicine, yeah?”

“Yeah, I get that, but. . .” Quackity’s hands flexed around his axe. “Would you have done it? Would you really have hurt Sapnap and George?”

Tommy shrugged. “I don’t make empty threats.”

Quackity reeled back like he’d been struck. Tommy ignored him, turning back to Dream.

“So why’d you run?” He pressed. “And to *Technoblade*, of all people.”

Dream narrowed his eyes. “I’m not going back with you. I’m done with your games.”

Tommy laughed. It wasn’t a pleasant sound. “A few weeks with Technoblade,” he mused, “and you’re already forgetting what you are.”

Ah, so they were taking this into *delicate* territory. Dream curled his fingers in the hem of his shirt and said nothing.

“You need a reminder,” Tommy mused. His conversational tone sent chills down Dream’s spine - because he recognized it. Because he himself had used it many times before, when he’d been threatening Tommy.

Tommy hummed, turning to the pile of discarded items. Nudging a foot beneath the cloak, he kicked it to the side. “A reminder,” he repeated.

Flint and steel sparked in his hands. The cloak went up in flames. Dream lunged forward, injured ribs screaming as he slammed into the bars. “NO--!”

He watched numbly as the pale blue cloth blackened and disintegrated. Hours of painstaking work, gone just like that. This must have been how Tommy felt, whenever Dream made him destroy his own items. How many times had Dream dug that hole? How many times had he ordered Tommy to empty his inventory?

Dream wanted to throw up. He didn’t. Instead, he watched as the flames devoured the last scrap of blue cloth, leaving nothing but ash.

When the platform began to catch fire as well, Tommy dumped a water bucket on the mess and stamped out the remaining flames. The end result was a large patch of soot, marring the otherwise pristine stage. Dream stared at it, his fingers white around the cloth of his shirt.

“Huh,” Tommy said mildly. But when he turned to him, Dream saw the same horror and self-loathing reflected in his eyes. It was a testament to his acting skill that neither appeared in his voice. “So, what should I burn next?”

“Stop,” someone said.

Tommy’s trembling hands curled into fists as he turned to Fundy, who only stood up straighter.

“Stop,” the fox hybrid repeated. He took a step forward, closer to the platform. “Tommy, what the *fuck* are you doing?”

“Teaching him a lesson,” Tommy said. Dream curled in on himself, wincing as he recalled all the times he’d used the same excuse. “You have a problem with that, Fundy?”

“Um, *yes?! What part of--*” Fundy gestured at the smoking remains of the cloak, “--*that* counts as teaching!?”

Tommy scoffed. “You all were going to kill him anyway. I’m just making sure the message sticks.”

Fundy shook his head. “Tommy, this isn’t-- this is straight-out *torture*, man. You’re playing with him. That’s not-- it’s not--”

“Good? *Right?*” Fundy took a step back at the vitriol dripping from Tommy’s words. “Don’t be stupid, Fundy. Dream brought this on himself. He deserves this.”

“That’s--”

“Did you forget Manberg?” Tommy demanded. “Did you forget *Schlatt*? Did you forget who was giving him power? Did you forget *him*--” he jabbed a finger in Dream’s direction, “--laughing while *this nation* went up in flames?!” He turned on Dream. “And *you!* You were the one who gave Wilbur his TNT!”

Dream swallowed, something uncomfortable roiling in his chest as he recalled the mentioned events. Tommy must have noticed, because his previous ire melted into forced calm. He sighed.

“You’re not going to give up, are you?”

Dream remained stubbornly silent.

“Fine. If you’re so insistent on being a problem, I’ll treat you like one.” Tommy smiled, and for a second he let a bit of genuine friendliness leak into his voice. “Catch you later, green boy.”

He pulled the lever.

The last thing Dream heard was the wet *crunch* of metal against bone.

**130.**

Tommy opened his eyes to see Dream.

They were sitting on opposite ends of the cell. Dream stiffened when he realized where he was, gaze jolting up to meet Tommy's. He hastily looked away, picking at his fingernails.

Well. This wasn't the most ideal place to talk, but Tommy wasn't going to waste another loop trying to find Dream. It was either now or never-- well, not never, more like *much later*.

He shoved those thoughts aside and cleared his throat. Dream went still, gaze fixed on the obsidian floor.

"Dream."

". . . Hey," Dream rasped. He didn't look up.

"I've been. . . thinking," Tommy started, "that uh, maybe we could give this-- this whole working together shit a try."

Dream stilled, raising his head to shoot Tommy a bewildered look.

"This doesn't mean I forgive you," Tommy added hastily. "This isn't-- you're not the one in charge here. The only reason I'm agreeing is because I don't want to be stuck in this fuckin' time loop forever."

"Aren't you scared?" Dream asked.

Tommy hesitated. He was tempted to bluster, to claim that he wasn't scared of Dream anymore, to tell the man that he held no power over him. But a little voice in the back of his head (that sounded suspiciously like Puffy) reminded him that sometimes, brutal honesty held far more weight than obvious bluffing.

"I'm fucking terrified," Tommy admitted. Dream jerked back, his eyes widening. "I don't think you're a better person now, that's-- that's bullshit. You're probably just plotting to backstab me or some shit, but--" he gritted his teeth, narrowing his eyes. "I know the signs now, Dream. Don't try anything, or the deal gets called off."

Dream was silent for several long seconds. Tommy swallowed, watching as unreadable microexpressions flickered across his face. At last he dipped his head. "That's. . . reasonable."

Tommy's palms were sweating. He wiped them on his pants, shoving down the fear roiling in his stomach. "Okay," he said. "If we're gonna work together, we gotta set some rules."

Dream shrugged, though the action was stiff. “What are they?”

Tommy scowled, tucking his shaking hands between his knees. It was. . . really fucking weird, seeing Dream like this. It was like his entire personality had been overwritten or some shit. The entire thing gave him the creeps.

“No lies. We need to *talk* shit out if we’re actually going to work together.”

“Alright.”

“No killing, either.” Tommy glared at him. “Directly or indirectly. If you kill someone, I’m quitting.”

Dream laced his fingers together and *pulled*, his knuckles straining white. He didn’t look up at Tommy. “. . . What about for self defense?”

Tommy breathed through his instinct to snap a denial, forcing himself to take a step back and *look* at the situation. The way things were going, they’d be looping into the post-final-confrontation era several more times before they could get a solid strategy to consistently break Dream out. That meant that Dream would likely be forced to face Quackity a few more times. And Tommy, as much as he hated Dream, didn’t want him to. . . go through that.

“Not their final life,” he ground out.

Dream’s head jerked up and down in a nod. “I can do that. But.” He looked to the side. “If I-- kill someone. . . if I kill someone, *permanently*, I’ll bring them back. With. With the book.”

Tommy’s nerves went alight. He was faintly aware of his pulse thundering in his ears, staccato-sharp, and the ache growing in his chest. Memories of that fucking *void* cycled through his mind, pressing in on him and eating away at his very being until he had nothing. Memories of *being* nothing, until chartreuse strings split the darkness and dragged him into the realm of the living.

“Yeah,” he forced out through clenched teeth. His voice cracked. “You. Do that.”

Dream looked. . . for lack of a better word, very uncomfortable. Served the bastard right.

Tommy forced himself to breathe, cycling through his exercises until his heartbeat slowed to a reasonable pace. He relaxed his muscles, one by one, before finally looking back at Dream.

“Last one-- and fuck if I know you’re gonna break it-- respect my fucking boundaries.” Tommy scowled halfheartedly, feeling inexplicably *tired*. “I’m a human being, Dream, and you’re gonna treat me like one.”

Dream swallowed. “I. . . Of course.”

“And. . . these rules go for you too,” Tommy grumbled. Dream blinked in surprise. “I’ll respect your boundaries if you respect mine.”

“O. . . kay?”

“Right.” Tommy turned his glare on the wall of lava. “Well, when I get out, I’ll start figuring out a way to break you out. We can’t work together if you’re stuck in here half the time.”

Dream’s breathing hitched. Tommy glanced at him to see that he’d gone stock-still, gaze boring into the floor. “You. . .” he started, his voice trembling. He cleared his throat. “You’re going to. To break me out?”

“Well, I’m gonna damn well try,” Tommy scoffed. “It’ll take us a few loops to figure it out, but we have time.”

“Right,” Dream murmured. He returned to picking at his hands.

Tommy gnawed on the inside of his cheek. His suspicions were almost all but confirmed, but he still needed to know. Still needed to *know* that it had really happened.

“Dream.” The man in question tensed. “Did. . . was Quackity hurting you?”

Dream paused, completely still for three long seconds. Then his head snapped up. “You didn’t know?”

Tommy recoiled. “What the fuck?! No! Quackity did all that shit by himself!”

Dream *stared* at him. His next words scraped off his tongue like shards of broken glass. “You. . . didn’t know.”

Tommy gritted his teeth. “Dream, I don’t condone torture.” *Unlike you*, went unsaid.

“You didn’t know,” the other man repeated. “He-- all this time, he said-- I thought--”

“Well you thought wrong,” Tommy scoffed.

Dream sat forward, a desperate light shining in his eyes. Tommy tensed. “Sorry, just. . . did, did the others know?”

“No? I told you, Quackity was acting on his own.”

Dream smiled. It was jagged at the edges and half-delirious, born from the mad joy that came with a giddy realization at rock bottom. Tommy instinctively drew back at the sight of it, but Dream didn’t even seem to notice.

“They didn’t know,” he breathed, curling inwards as he dug his fingers into his matted hair. “They-- *they didn’t know*, they didn’t tell him to do it.” His smile widened even as tears began trickling down his cheeks. “Ha, they-- it was just-- him, they didn’t-- ha-- haha--”

“Dream?” Tommy shifted. The rough obsidian scraped across his back. “Dream, you’re, uh, being weird.”

Dream’s eyes snapped to him. “They *didn’t know*,” he choked out. “They didn’t tell him to do it, they didn’t tell him I *deserved* it, it was all him-- I thought, I thought George or Sapnap *knew*, and they didn’t-- they just didn’t--”

Oh.

*Oh.*

“They don’t know,” Tommy blurted. “They didn’t. Nobody did.”

Dream hunched in on himself, burying his face in his knees. It did nothing to stop the unsettling laughter spilling past his lips. Tommy shrank back against the wall of the cell, digging his nails into his knees to ground himself. He bit on the inside of his cheek and followed his breathing exercises, trying to ignore the madman giggling hysterically on the other side of the cell.

When Dream had finally fallen silent, Tommy cleared his throat. “So.”

“So,” Dream echoed. His voice was hoarse. Tommy glanced at the blinking red light in the corner of the ceiling so he didn’t have to look at him.

“Sam. . . does Sam have microphones in here?”

Dream didn’t comment on the subject change. It was an unspoken agreement to pretend that the last five minutes hadn’t happened. “No.”

“Great. Okay. So, breaking you out of jail.” Tommy curled and uncurled his hands, taking a deep breath. “Tell me how Techno did it, and we can go from there.”

## Chapter End Notes

[watch this to recover from angst](#)

\*Squints\* this chapter felt too Dream-sympathetic for my tastes. Lemme know if I need to slow down the redemption arc

penh.guin made some [beautiful fanart of that one baking loop with karl!](#)

[Tommy leading Dreaxter back to the prison](#) and [Dream with glitter](#) by El! :D

some hilarious [ot gacha videos](#) by •×{LonnieGacha18}×• !

Also: WE’VE CROSSED 100K WORDS WHOOOO! Thank you all for sticking around this long <3

### **Loop Notes**

**126.** It was the first time Tommy had gotten so close to Michael. He wasn’t prepared for how touchy-feely Michael got, but. . . it was nice.

**127.** Plot twist: Tommy’s deaging potions don’t actually erase memories! Fundy knew *exactly* what he was doing.

**128.** Dream spent ten loops practicing how to draw hands, just so he could do this.

# Chapter 27

## Chapter Notes

discord server voted for remix over lore or dreaxter so HAVE MORE REMIX

### Spotlighted Comments

**DanganronpaFan0519:** the child has acquired the ability to koala hug not just one, not just two- actually no wait, NOT JUST ONE BUT TWO TALL PEOPLE

**Clearly\_Crystal\_Clear:** Forget the loops or revival book, Dream's real power is being able to actually draw hands. Respect.

### **HekorumaArt02:**

Tommy: Puts a good 2,000 years worth of fighting under his belt so he could kick Techno's ass easily (even without the physic)

Dream: "I'M GONNA LEARN HOW TO DRAW HANDS!"

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

### **131.** *(credit to Firehedgehog and ori)*

“Are we sure she’s going to fall for it?”

“Shh,” Tommy hissed, eyes narrowed. Dream fell silent and sunk a little lower into the bushes they were hiding in.

In the distance, Niki Nihachu circled the chest they had left in front of her bakery, perplexed and slightly suspicious. The loopers watched with bated breath as she tested the latch, then took a step back. Eventually, her curiosity won out.

She opened the chest, and was promptly buried under a wave of multicolored keys. The two loopers observing her winced in tandem.

“Well,” Dream said. “Now we know the trap works. By the way, why keys?”

“Ni-key.”

Dream sat there for a moment, trying to comprehend what he’d heard. Then he sighed. “Is this what we’re going to be doing for the rest of this loop?”

“Dream, big man, I have a hitlist.”

---



“Can I ask where you got all these tubs?”

“No.”

“Okay.” Dream flipped a smaller tub over and slid it into the place where Tubbo’s nightstand used to occupy. “You know, he’s going to be pissed when he comes home and finds all his furniture replaced with tubs.”

“Or he might find it funny. You never know with Tubbo.”

Dream sighed. “Are you *sure* this is a good idea? We’re painting a huge target on our backs here, and you know how Tubbo is when we piss him off.”

“We’ll just have to take that risk. Tubbo’s name is too punny *not* to be taken advantage of.”

“Hmm. If we get murdered, I’m blaming you.”

Tommy just cackled as he wrenched Tubbo’s sink out of the floor.

---

“Dream. My friend. My fellow traumatized time-looper. Where the fuck did you get all of those.”

Dream hummed as he dumped another box’s worth of burrs on Wilbur’s coat. Wilbur was going to be in for a nasty surprise when he put it on the next morning. “Wouldn’t you like to know,” was all he said.

Tommy rolled his eyes. “Fine, you bastard. Keep your fucking secrets.”

“I will!” Dream finished up with the burrs, tossed the empty box aside, and began filling the pockets with glitter. Tommy stared at him for a long moment, then scowled.

“I’ll figure out where you get your glitter one day.”

“I’d like to see you try.”

---

Foolish stared at the stack of papers sitting innocuously in the center of his temple. It had been weighed down with a rock, preventing the wind from carrying it away. He approached, removed the rock, and picked up the first page.

The top of the sheet declared itself to be “Calculus Exam: Basics of Integration”. His name was scribbled in the corner, right next to the big red “0/100, FAIL”.

“Huh,” he said, and incinerated the stack with a bolt of lightning. After all, if there was one thing he'd learned in all his years of living, it was that calculus deserved to burn in hell.

---

## World Chat

<JackManifold>: *guys*

<JackManifold>: *help*

<Ranboo>: *???*

<JackManifold>: *I'm trapped in a box*

<JackManifold>: *I can't get out*

<Ranboo>: *Where?*

<JackManifold>: *61.72158/14.51883/4.46*

<TommyInnit>: *OooOoOO Jack trapped ina box???*

<TommyInnit>: *like a jack in a box????*

<JackManifold>: *I am going to murder you*

<TommyInnit>: *ok*

<TommyInnit>: *boomer*

<JackManifold>: *IM NOT EVEN THAT OLD*

<Niki>: *ok boomer*

<JackManifold>: *.*

<JackManifold>: *te betrayal*

<JackManifold>: *niki how could you*

<Niki>: *:D*

---

“Sapnap, mi amigo. What the *fuck* did we do last night?”

Sapnap scowled, shifting from where he was sitting on his hands. “How the fuck would I know? I just woke up with this tattoo--”

“And I woke up in a *duck onesie*!” Quackity gestured downwards at the aforementioned duck onesie. “Where the fuck did they even get this?!”

“At least you have control over your body!” Sapnap jerked one hand up, scowling as his fingers began snapping. He stuffed it back under his leg, forcing it to stay still. “I can’t stop *snapping*!”

“A *duck onesie*,” Quackity repeated, rubbing his fuzzy hands together. He paused, brows furrowing. “Wait, this is. . . kinda soft, actually. I might keep it.”

“Great. Good for you. Mind giving me a hand here?”

Quackity rolled his eyes and shuffled over to squint at Sapnap’s new tattoo. “Huh. Looks like an Enchantment.”

“Oh *really*? I never could’ve guessed!”

Quackity snorted. “It’s a henna tattoo. It’ll wear off in a few days.”

Sapnap stared at him. “So I’m going to keep snapping for a *few days*?”

“Probably.”

“ . . . Fuck.”

---

Tommy sighed, tapping the next names on their list. Dream looked up from where he was poring over his own copy, raising an eyebrow.

“Something wrong?”

“Sam, Punz, and Ponk.” he grumbled. “They’re just. . . how the fuck do you make a pun out of those names?”

Dream hummed. “Well. . . Sam’s communicator tag is already a pun - ‘Awesamdude’, if I’m remembering it right - so we could try whipping something up with that.”

“Maybe spray-painting the worst pun we can think of on his chestplate?”

“Mm. Or we could paint ‘Pawesamdude’ on his armor and glue cat ears to his head.”

Tommy’s pen flew over the page, recording the words. Several miles away, Sam felt a chill go down his spine. “Perfect. And then Punz and Ponk?”

“Punz. . . puns. We could bribe everyone to specifically write his name as ‘puns’, like with an S, in messages. Oh, and change the engravings on his weapons! He puts his name in those.”

“Puns,” Tommy snickered. He scribbled some more. “And Ponk?”

Dream winced. “. . . You know, it might not be a good idea to mess with Ponk.”

“What? Why?”

“Two words. Lemon juice.”

Both loopers paused, gazes drifting into thousand-yard stares as they recalled Ponk’s wrath. Tommy shuddered. “Yeah, no. We’ll just. . . leave him be.”

“Mm. Probably for the best.”

In the distance, there was an explosion. An enraged scream rose above the inferno, its origin easily identifiable as one Tubbo Underscore.

“TOMMYINNIT! WHERE THE FUCK IS MY COUCH?!”

Tommy and Dream glanced at each other.

“Run?”

“Run.”

### **132.** *(credit to Xela\_M)*

Tommy took a deep, deep breath. “Friends, Comrades,” he began in a deep, mournful voice, “We are here today. . . because *someone* couldn’t stay alive.”

Everyone in the audience nodded with grave expressions, though some had to smother ‘coughs’ behind handkerchiefs. Tubbo let out what could best be considered a mangled sob, because it was definitely not a laugh, no siree. This was a very serious event.

“It is with great sorrow,” Tommy continued, “that we must gather to commemorate the life of our leader, our friend, our comrade, Wilbur Soot--”

“I’M NOT DEAD, YOU FUCKERS!”

“--who died as he lived, being a little bitch.” Tommy wiped a tear from the corner of his eye, ignoring Dream, who appeared to be choking on his lungs in the front row. “President Soot was such a great man, an inspiring figure to all of us. May our heartfelt eulogies--”

“I am *literally* right here--”

“--do justice to his magnificent character--”

“Stop pretending you can’t hear me!”

“--and embody his best virtues.” Tommy sighed. “A good man, he was. The greatest bastard of them all.”

“Oh for the love of--” Wilbur slammed a palm against the obsidian box he was trapped in. “Will you just let me out?!”

“Sometimes I think I can still hear his voice.”

“Because I’m *not dead!*”

“With that being said, we will now commence this memorial service,” Tommy announced with a flourish. “Niki Nihachu will be the first to speak.”

Niki managed to wrestle her chortle into a sniff as she stepped onto the platform. Tommy stepped aside, allowing her to take over the podium. “Wilbur Soot was a great man,” she began. “With a big heart and glorious dreams of the future, and though he wasn’t the sharpest knife in the drawer--”

“What the fuck is that supposed to mean?!”

“--he only had the best intentions for our wondrous country.”

“*Drugs!*” someone called from the crowd. It sounded suspiciously like Tubbo.

“The *best intentions*,” Niki repeated, though her eyes shone with mirth. “It is a shame that he met his demise before he could see his dreams play out.”

Wilbur groaned. “I hate all of you.”

“In his stead, we, the people of L’Manberg, will carry his dream for him.” Niki placed a hand over her heart and took a deep breath so she wouldn’t start laughing. “As a proud citizen of this land, I vow to make L’Manberg the country Wilbur wanted it to be.” She bowed her head. “Wilbur, if you’re watching over us. . . I hope I can make you proud.”

“Oh yes, I am *definitely* watching over you because-- you know what? This isn’t worth it. Fuck this. Fuck all of you.”

Niki stepped back from the podium, shoulders shaking with silent “sobs”. Tommy swooped in before her tearful façade could break. “Thank you, Niki,” he simpered. “A truly moving eulogy. I’m sure Wilbur would be greatly touched by your public speaking skills if he was here.”

“I will murder you,” Wilbur promised darkly. “I will go into your house while you’re asleep and smother you with your own pillow.”

“And the next speaker will be Fundy,” Tommy declared, unperturbed by the threats. Fundy shuffled up to the front, carefully *not* looking in Wilbur’s direction.

“Wilbur was an amazing leader,” he started. “But more than that, he was an amazing father.”

Wilbur’s angry muttering was cut off with a sharp inhale.

“He raised me, through the good times and the bad. He helped me become the person I am today, and nobody will ever be able to replace him.”

“Oh,” Wilbur whispered. “Fundy. . .”

“So I want to honor his memory.” Fundy knitted his fingers in the fabric of his suit. “I want to carry on his legacy, to pass the story of his life down through the ages, both the good times and the bad--”

Wilbur went from teary-eyed to indignant in an instant. “Fundy Soot, I *forbid* you--”

--but. . . his life story is too complicated and difficult to retell.”

“Thank Prime.”

“So instead I’ve compiled a list of all the embarrassing things I’ve seen him do! Plus some extra stories from Tommy.” He pulled out a book, opened it to the first page, and cleared his throat. “Okay. First of all, when I was three, my dad tried to show me that sand was edible--”

Wilbur began banging his head against the obsidian.

### 133. (*inspired by AlbiNora*)

Sapnap was very confused. Emphasis on the very.

He’d stepped onto the beach to see Tommy and Dream bantering beside a smoking crater. Well, it was less banter and more Dream messing with Tommy while the kid squawked like an angry chicken, so Sapnap stepped in and told Dream to knock it off. Then he joked that it was pretty funny, and Tommy puffed up, a flurry of indignant insults on his tongue--

--only to go bone-white, trip over his own feet, and land heavily in the grass.

“Oh shit,” he wheezed, tangling his fingers in his hair. “Oh *shit*. ”

Dream, meanwhile, took five large strides away and began stripping away his armor. “Wha-- Dream?” Sapnap asked, because nobody just-- *took off* their armor on this server. Dream ignored him as he shrugged his cloak off, then proceeded to produce the lime-green hoodie he hadn’t worn in ages and. . . stuck his legs into the sleeves.

“Dream?” Bad called. He came to a stop beside Sapnap, eyeing [the scene](#) with concern.

“What are you doing?”

Dream, by now, had managed to pull the hoodie over his head and was in the process of stuffing his left arm in as well. He paused, reached up, and removed his mask, eliciting a startled yelp from Bad and a sharp inhale from Sapnap. Then he shoved his right arm into the hoodie sleeve and waddled over to Tommy (who, now that Sapnap was paying attention, appeared to be having a fucking *panic attack*), and said with no inflection whatsoever, “Look, I’m a crab.”

Tommy choked, head whipping up. A wheezing laugh slipped between his rapid breaths. Dream tried to balance on one leg, fell over, and *rolled*.

“What the fuck,” was Sapnap’s eloquent comment.

“Language!” Bad scolded on autopilot, though his eyes had widened to the size of dinner plates.

“Help,” Dream deadpanned, now on his back and waving his leg-arm hoodie sleeves in the air like an upended turtle. “I’ve fallen and I can’t get up.”

“Drea-- *Prime*, Dream--” Tommy spluttered, his hands relaxing from their death grip in his hair. “That was-- that was terrible.”

“I try,” Dream said. “Mind giving me a hand?”

“Gimme a minute,” Tommy rasped. He took a few grounding breaths, then uncurled and crawled over to roll Dream onto his feet.

“Thank you,” Dream said, before he took one step and faceplanted in the grass. Tommy began cackling.

Sapnap blinked, as though that would break him out of whatever strange dream he’d fallen into. “Are you all high?”

“No!” Bad protested, at the same time that Tommy said, “Maybe.”

“We aren’t,” Dream muttered through a mouthful of dirt. He sat up, spat it out, and glanced sidelong at Tommy. “I mean, are we sure that this is real and the loops haven’t been one big drug-induced hallucination?”

“Reality could be one big drug-induced hallucination.”

“Thanks, Tommy. I really needed to hear that.”

“You’re welcome.”

Dream tried to kick Tommy with one of his leg-arms. He missed and fell on his back again.

“I despise you,” he told the sky.

“Love you too, big D.”

“. . . I think they're high," Sapnap whispered to Bad. "Should we. . . I dunno, grab Tommy and run? He doesn't seem to be doing too great--"

"I can hear you," Dream grumbled. He fixed them with an upside-down glare. "And for your information, Tommy is fine--"

"I'm really not."

--Tommy is *going* to be fine--"

"That's a fucking lie."

Dream took a deep breath. ". . . Tommy is not fine, but there's nothing you can do about it."

"I meaaaaan. . . I'd feel a lot better if we covered this shitty beach with cobblestone towe--"

"No."

"Bitch."

"Child."

"I'm older than Philza Minecraft."

"And I'm older than you. Checkmate." Dream rolled onto his side and made a valiant attempt at standing up. "Mind helping me up?"

"Yes, actually. Lay there and starve."

Bad hesitantly offered a hand to Dream. Dream stared at it.

"I can't grab your hand," he said. "You can just. . . turn me over, or something. With your foot."

"Wha-- Dream, I'm not kicking you!"

"And I'm not pulling my hands out of these sleeves," Dream retorted. "Kick me, it's not like you can hurt me."

"Just leave 'im," Tommy suggested. He crawled to his feet and stood there for a moment, swaying. Sapnap hurried forward and grabbed his arm before he could fall into the hole. Meanwhile, Dream, with Bad's assistance, had gotten to his. . . feet? Hands? And shuffled over to join them.

"How long do you think I can do this?" he wondered.

"I bet a custom potion that your spine snaps before the loop ends."

"Deal."



Philza narrowed his eyes at the oblong box. It sat innocently on his front porch, covered with a light dusting of snow. Strangely enough, there were no footprints leading towards or away from it.

He scanned the horizon. There was nobody in sight. “Techno?” he called, although it was unlikely that the box was from the piglin hybrid. As expected, there was no reply.

Philza huffed, deliberated for another minute, then dragged the box into the house. Nobody on this server had demonstrated the ability to trap an object yet, so he was pretty sure that it wasn’t going to blow up if he opened it. That being said, it was better to be safe than sorry.

He sliced the ties binding the box shut with one swipe of his sword, then raised his shield and carefully levered the box open with the tip of his blade. The lid fell away with a clunk, and when nothing burst out of the container, Philza shuffled over to get a closer look.

The inside of the box was lined with foam, nestled around a mass of. . . something. Philza poked at it, and when it didn’t slice his fingers off, he extricated it from its padding and laid it down on the floor. It seemed to unfold a bit, so he pulled it further, letting it unfurl to its full size.

“Oh,” he whispered.

It was a prosthetic. A prosthetic *wing*. Philza sunk to his knees, reaching blindly back to grasp his burnt feathers.

In all the years of his life, he’d never seen a prosthetic this advanced. It had clearly been made with him in mind - he could recognize the curve and shape of the feathers, so similar to his destroyed wing that his heart ached at the sight of it. Sloe-black feathers had been painstakingly inlaid into the hollow netherite frame. The prosthetic gleamed with a purple sheen as he shifted it this way and that, and when he looked closely, he could see tiny runes carved into each rachis. The entire thing was lighter than it should have been, layered with Feather Falling, Efficiency, Mending, Unbreaking, and other enchantments that Philza had never seen before.

Philza blinked as salt bloomed across his tongue. He touched his face, surprised to feel tears. He should be overjoyed. He *was* overjoyed. He finally had a chance to regain what he’d lost, to reclaim the freedom he craved. And yet. . .

He’d murdered his own son, cradled him in his arms as his lifeblood pooled around his knees. His flight was the price he paid for his sin. He should have refused, should have hugged Wilbur and stopped him before-- before *that*, but he hadn’t and he’d run his *own son through* with the sword he still wielded and *fuck* did he regret it every day. His wing was nothing compared to the pain that tore at his heart day in and day out. He didn’t deserve this. He didn’t deserve the chance to leap, to soar, to join his flock as they skimmed across the clouds. He deserved this pain, this suffering, because it was only a *fraction* of what Wilbur had gone through after he’d--

“Phil?”

Philza jerked, head snapping up. Technoblade stood in the doorway, face creased with concern.

“Phil?” he repeated. “I thought I heard you callin’ me, are you alright?”

An incredulous noise rose in his throat, spiraling out as a strangled sob. Technoblade took a step into the house, his arms twitching like he wanted to hug Philza but wasn't quite sure how to do it. “Phil, what’s wrong? Why’re you. . .” his gaze landed on the prosthetic. “Oh.”

“*Oh,*” Philza echoed. His hands were shaking. Why were his hands shaking?

“Well, that’s--” Technoblade cleared his throat. “--was not expecting to see. That. Okay. This is-- Phil, this is great. This is *amazing*. I’m-- assumin’ that prosthetic works, you can fly again-- Phil, why are you cryin’? This is-- this is good, right--”

“But *Wilbur*,” Philza blurted. “I-- I *can’t*. ”

“. . . I’m not followin’ your train of thought here,” Technoblade admitted. He shuffled around the box and knelt down beside the prosthetic. “You’ve got a prosthetic, Phil, don’t you want to put it on, and, I dunno, fly? What’s it got to do with Wilbur?”

“I killed him,” Philza said. “I don’t deserve to fly again.”

Technoblade was silent for five long seconds. At last, he sighed, glancing off to the side. “I’m not good at this,” he muttered, then took a deep breath. “Phil, Wilbur. . . wouldn’t have wanted you to do this to yourself. He. . . asked to be killed. He made his choice.”

“I could have helped him.”

“You could’ve,” Technoblade agreed, and Philza flinched like he’d been struck. “That being said, torturin’ yourself isn’t gonna bring Wilbur back. What’s done is done. You have an opportunity to fly again. Take it. Let yourself be happy.”

Philza chewed on the inside of his cheek. “But. . . it’s not fair.”

“What?”

“I get to heal, to have a second chance, but-- Wilbur. . .”

“What’s done is done,” Technoblade repeated firmly. “Phil, I know that it’s tearin’ you apart inside, but. . . you deserve a chance to heal, too. You came to this server expectin’ a reunion and had to kill him instead. You didn’t ask for that, and it wasn’t fair for him to put that on you.”

“But I still did it. I still--”

“Phil. Look at me.”

Philza looked up. Technoblade glowered at him, more exasperated than angry.

“Philza Minecraft. Did you drive Wilbur to insanity?”

“... No.”

“And what did?”

"L-- L'Manberg."

"Right. Then why are you--"

“Because L'Manberg drove him insane, but I still fucking *killed him*, Techno! What the fuck is so hard to understand about that?!”

Technoblade stood firm in the face of his misplaced fury. “And I *saw* him spiralin’, Phil. I was with him for *months* and I didn’t do anything.”

“He wasn’t your responsibility--”

“And he wasn’t yours either.”

“I’m his father--”

“He wasn’t a kid. He understood the consequences and he made his choice.”

“I failed him--”

“And so did I, and a lot of other people. Phil.” Technoblade reached over the prosthetic and put his hands on Philza’s shoulders. “You can’t keep doing this to yourself.”

Philza looked away.

“... And besides, I don’t think your Chat would be very happy if you just threw away their gift.”

Philza startled. “Chat? What’ve they got to do with this?”

Technoblade held up a card, likely taken from the box. Philza took it from him, flipping it open. The message appeared to have been written by two different people, with varying styles of chicken scratch that became legible only if he tilted the card about 23 degrees clockwise and squinted a bit.

***Hello ~~old man~~ Philza,***

***Your ~~flock of menaces~~ creepy sentient flesh-eating birds commissioned us to make this for you. We hope you like it. :)***

***- The Mechanics <--this is a stupid name***

***p.s. this took fucking FOREVER to make so if you break it I will pluck you like a fucking chicken. that is not a threat, that is a promise. DON'T. BREAK IT.***

Philza's mouth was dry. "Oh," he rasped.

"Yeah. So will you accept it?"

Philza studied the prosthetic. Gifts of this caliber from Chat were. . . rare, to say the least. Very rare. But even the gifts that were less valuable, like the bottle caps the crows liked to tuck into his pockets or the shiny rocks they filled his shoes with, he kept in a special chest. They were a reminder that he was forgiven. That they held no grudge against him.

And now, Chat had united to provide this gift. The gift of flight, which he'd thought he'd lost forever.

A lump formed in his throat. Technoblade studied his expression, then nodded.

"Well then old man, let's get this on you."

Philza stood, obediently spreading his mangled wing to allow Technoblade to fit the prosthetic on. It fit like a - well, not like a glove, because nothing could ever replace his real wing, but it fit so seamlessly that Philza wondered how Chat had given the Mechanics measurements. The straps holding the wing in place were comfortable and fairly unobtrusive. Then he shuddered as the cold metal *clicked* into place against his bones, but gritted his teeth and bore it. It was probably necessary to make the wing move with his own muscles.

After what felt like an eternity, Technoblade stepped back. "There," he grunted. "How does it feel?"

Philza shifted, rocking back and forth on his heels. The new weight against his back was. . . odd, but familiar. Whoever had made the prosthetic had gotten its mass distribution down almost perfectly; Philza had no trouble maintaining his balance.

With cautious steps, he shuffled forward. Technoblade hovered behind him, ready to catch him if he were to suddenly topple over, but there was no need. Philza's steps grew more confident as he stepped out of his house, until he was striding down the stairs to the snow below. There he stopped, glancing back at Technoblade, who watched him expectantly.

With a shuddering breath, Philza unfolded his wings. He could hear redstone whirring in the joints as the prosthetic obeyed his commands. Turning his head, he tried folding them again, watching in awe as they moved, perfectly in sync with his real wing. He ran them through every range of motion he could think of, ending with a powerful flap that forced him to take a step back.

"It works," he whispered, turning to Techno. And then he was laughing, stumbling forward, and Technoblade was laughing too, catching him, and then they were spinning across the

snowy ground with no care for how ridiculous they looked because-- “holy shit, Techno, it *works!*”

“It works,” Technoblade echoed, and the setting sun illuminated the joy shining in his eyes. “Phil, you can *fly again!*”

“I can fly!” Philza crowed, his wings-- *wings! Plural!!* -- flapping jubilantly. “I can *fly!*”

As if on cue, a caw sounded in the distance. Both men turned to see a sea of crows amassing on the horizon, growing larger by the minute. Technoblade hastily released Philza, retreating out of range. And then the murder hit.

Chat surrounded Philza in a whirlwind of feathers and gleeful screams. Philza screamed right back, eyes wild with untamable joy. He spread his wings, and Chat rose, beckoning him towards the sky.

Philza hesitated. His gaze turned to Technoblade, who rolled his eyes and made a shooing motion. “Go on, Phil. You’ve waited too long.”

That was all the encouragement he needed. Philza crouched, reassuming the position burned into him by decades of muscle memory. With a deep breath, he raised his wings, letting them rest in the air.

It was the moment of truth.

His wings fell in a powerful downstroke. He leapt. A second downstroke. His feet left the ground. And then on the third downstroke, he was in the air, flapping furiously but gaining altitude, up and up towards the ring of crows as they circled the moon and screamed encouragement. A breeze caught on his feathers, and then a wind, and then he was soaring, wheeling among the stars as the Anarchist commune shrunk to a little square on the ground below and the world spread out before him and the wind whipped in his face and he spat out mouthful of hair and he was smiling and laughing and crying because he was flying, he was flying again after so long--

They broke through the cloud cover. Chat, for once, remained quiet, content to glide alongside their master. They listened as his laughter faded into silence, as he looked up at the stars in wonder, as he lowered a hand to skim through the clouds. Up here, it was peaceful. Up here, nothing would hurt him - not even himself.

“Thank you,” he said to them. The wind blew his words away, but the birds understood. They received his gratitude and basked in it, a few going so far as to peck affectionately at his hair. He batted them away, laughing, but they didn’t mind. Because for the first time since he’d stepped foot on this land, Philza was smiling a *real* smile, bright and unburdened.

And that was enough for them.

---

Tommy lowered the binoculars, scowling. “He didn’t read the wing-care manual or warnings before he used it, did he?”

Dream snorted. “Let him have his fun. One flight won’t destroy the wing.”

“But the clouds. The *moisture*.” Tommy groaned and (rather overdramatically) flung his arms into the air. “Think of the redstone, Dream!”

“I put water protection on everything. And fire protection. And-- you know, I think that prosthetic’s the most durable thing on this server right now. He’ll be fine.”

“But the *feathers*! Oh fuck, they’re gonna *clump*!”

Dream didn’t deign that with a reply. He watched as Philza disappeared behind the next cluster of clouds, then turned away. “. . . Well, it works. Let’s go.”

“Wha--? No, wait, we need to--”

“Worst comes to worst, we can just send another copy of the manual and paste a menacing smiley face on it or something. Or have the crows deliver it. Philza wouldn’t miss it then.”

“But the *moisture*,” Tommy insisted. “His wings’ll break if they get-- if they get moist!”

“I told you, we can send the manual again--”

“Too slow. I can just yeet this one at Technoblade.”

“Tommy, no.”

“Tommy, *yes*.”

“Tommy-- oh fuck, where did you-- TOMMY! GET BACK HERE!”

**135. remix, pt. 9 (inspired by Pooptato1341) ([see previous parts of this loop here](#))**

When Tommy pulled the lever, several things happened at once.

First, Dream disappeared under 200 pounds of steel, his death signaled by a puff of smoke.

Second, someone from the side of the plaza - they sounded a bit like Fundy, but Tommy wasn’t sure - shouted in alarm.

Third, Tommy jerked back as an arrow imbedded itself into the wood above the lever, mere *inches* from his face. He turned to see Philza raising his crossbow for another shot, most of the paralysis having worn off. A quick scan showed that the Butcher Army (minus Ranboo) was now approaching the platform, and Technoblade had begun moving (albeit very, very slowly). It was four against one, five if he counted Techno - not good odds.

Time to leave, then.

He whipped out one of his few remaining enderpearls and tossed it. The last thing he heard was Tubbo's cry for him to wait.

---

Tommy all but fell down the stairs of his base, tumbling inside and slamming the door shut. He sunk down against the wall, fingers digging into his scalp as though the action could prevent him from shaking apart.

Puffy's reminders rung in his mind. In for four, hold for seven, exhale for eight. Repeat. Compartmentalize. Break it down into small bits. He could do this.

Okay. Start from the beginning. How did this begin? What was his goal? He'd started with the intention of understanding Dream's motivations a bit more, yeah, but he hadn't prepared for it. Hadn't expected how *deep* it would get.

As he'd watched Dream's items go up in flames, a vindictive warmth had curled behind his ribs. It was the kind of exhilaration he'd gotten during the first Final Confrontation, when he'd stood over his abuser and ripped his power from his hands. But now it wasn't a matter of retribution - it was just beating down someone who'd already been fucked over.

But it still felt *good*. A tiny part of him glowed with vindictive pleasure, hissing about how Dream was getting a taste of his own medicine. It was disgusting. He hated it. He hated it, and yet--

Tommy dug his nails deeper into his skin. Something wet and warm dripped across his fingertips. He focused on the pain, because it was better than thinking about how he was *spiraling*. Spiraling, like how Dream had spiraled - *don't think about it*.

He breathed through clenched teeth and tried to think about something else. Air hissed between his teeth.

In for four, hold for seven, exhale for eight. Repeat.

His communicator vibrated against his hip. Tommy jerked, scrambling to his feet before he realized that there was no threat. He yanked the comm up and stared at the screen, half-terrified of what he'd see.

### **Private Messaging: Dream**

<Dream>: *respwaned ok*

<Dream>: *did you get out*

<Dream>: are u ol

<Dream>: \*ok?

### **Private Messaging: Tubbo**

<Tubbo\_>: tommy, where are you?

<Tubbo\_>: can we talk?

Without thinking, Tommy threw his communicator across the room. It hit the far wall and clattered to the floor.

“Fuck fuck fuck,” he hissed, scrambling over and scooping it up. A quick scan revealed no damage. He stood there for a moment, just *breathing*, then looked down at the screen again.

Tubbo’s messages were swept aside. He could deal with those later. Right now, he needed to think.

This loop was spinning out of control. The lines between acting and *genuine emotion* were blurring. It would be dangerous to let things continue, and if Tommy said something right here, right now, Dream would drop it. Then they could fake their deaths and try their hand at another cottagecore arc.

The thing was, Dream hadn’t said anything yet. If Tommy had crossed a line, he would have spoken up. Instead, Dream had *gone* with Tommy’s plan, even when both of them strayed into dangerous territory. He’d thrown away a *life* for the act.

And. . . Tommy wasn’t breaking any of the rules. He hadn’t killed any of the non-loopers, and even if he was causing them ‘extreme emotional distress’ or whatever fancy bullshit it was called, anything that happened this loop would disappear in the next. There were no consequences save for the mental effects it would have on the loopers - and Dream was fine, so Tommy had to be fine too. Besides, this wasn’t the final decision. If shit *really* hit the fan, they could easily back out.

Tommy took a deep breath and made up his mind.

### **Private Messaging: Dream**

<TommyInnit>: all good, pearled awy before they could attack

<TommyInnit>: whatr ur plans for the rest ofthis loop?

<TommyInnit>: bc I got a couple ideas



## Chapter End Notes

don't you just love dramatic irony :D

### **Loop Notes**

**131.** There are very few people that both loopers hold a healthy amount of fear for. Tubbo and Ponk are two of them.

**133.** He stayed a hoodie monster for the rest of the loop. . . including the lore bits. Thankfully for his spine, it was a short loop. Technoblade was very disturbed, though, when Dream showed up Like That to interrogate him about the whereabouts of Tommy.

**134.** Chat (with some creative potion-work) provided the feathers. Tommy built the frame with measurements taken from previous iterations of Philza and blueprints from Ponk. Dream added the enchantments. It took several loops' worth of trial and error, but the end result was definitely worth it.

# Chapter 28

## Chapter Notes

shoutout to astral for catching all the clues abt ot!karl I crammed into the last few chapters :D

### Spotlighted Comments

**nyanbinary\_87** : best solution to a panic attack i can think of. Carcinization

**Darkfury1087**: Dude giving Dream the ability to go hoodie mode is terrifying. The moment he figures out how to go fast all you're gonna hear is an ominous dodododo and see a flash of green. What powers have you bestowed upon him? Manhunts will never be the same XD

**Crystalcatgamer**: \*strums guitar\* Ponk's lemon juice mocktail, enhanced with the bitterness of malice, infused with the rage of a thousand suns and carefully poured onto your wounds. Suffer in absolute agony, bitch <3

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

### 136. (*inspired by Mikiri\_M*)

Technoblade was. . . well not scared, exactly. Technoblade never got scared - not for himself, at least. But he was feeling a *certain amount of anxiety*. Why?

Because there was something under his floorboards.

Now normally, Technoblade would have no problem dealing with a pest or two. For Prime's sake, he lived in a world with mobs. If he could stab his way through a horde of zombies, he could handle a couple mice.

Problem was, though, that the thing under his floorboards wasn't a mouse. He'd checked, and promptly slammed the blocks back into place with a loud "NOPE" when the. . . *creature*, which resembled a raccoon if raccoons were the size of grown men, lunged at him. Chat had laughed at him for twenty minutes straight afterward, but it was a small price to pay to avoid a fight with the mutated trash panda.

. . . Unfortunately, said mutated trash panda had somehow broken out of his basement, climbed up the ladder, and was now sitting in his living room with half of his gapple stash in its greasy paws. Technoblade stared at it. It took a bite of a gapple and stared back.

"Why," Technoblade said flatly.

The menace chittered at him. Two of the gapples balanced precariously on top the pile in its arms wobbled, fell to the floor, and rolled away. Chat began cackling in the back of his skull.

Technoblade sighed. “Get out of my house,” he ordered. The raccoon took another bite out of its gapple and did not move. Technoblade drew his sword.

The creature instantly melted into a ball of fluff and pity. Its beady eyes blinked up at him, folded in a pleading expression.

Technoblade was not affected. He *wasn't*. It wasn't cute. It was just. . . attacking this thing would feel like kicking a puppy. And while Technoblade might joke about murdering orphans, he wasn't a puppy-kicker.

He lowered his sword. The menace instantly sprang back up, chittered happily, and tossed a golden apple at Technoblade before booking it out of the house - breaking his front doors in the process. Technoblade stared at the shattered wood in dismay, then down at the gapple he'd caught on reflex.

It was drenched in some unidentifiable substance - either water or raccoon drool. Technoblade dropped it like a hot potato and spun on his heel, hurrying towards the cabinet where he kept his bleach.

Fixing the door could wait. He needed to clean his hand first.

---

Technoblade opened the door, then promptly slammed it shut when a giant, furry face beamed down at him. “No,” he said.

A whine sounded from outside. *Emotional support raccoon*, Chat suggested. *Emotional support mutated trash panda*.

“No,” he said louder.

A low huff. Something poked at the door hard enough to make it tremble.

“Leave,” he ordered.

A pause. Snow crunched under a heavy weight outside, and then the raccoon's furry face appeared in his window. It blinked innocently at him.

Technoblade narrowed his eyes. “Go away. Shoo. I don't have food for you.”

The raccoon tilted its head, and then proceeded to pull those *puppy eyes* on him. Technoblade wasn't going to fall for that trick again.

“No,” he snapped. “Leave me alone.”

The raccoon's ears drooped. It looked, somehow, impossibly sadder. Technoblade wavered, then steeled himself. He wasn't going to give in. He was a warrior, a giant raccoon was not

going to defeat him in a battle of wills--

“Look, will you leave if I give you a golden apple?”

Prime *damnit*.

The raccoon perked up, baring its teeth in a hopeful grin. Technoblade groaned, but a promise was a promise. He retrieved a gapple from his inventory, pulled the window open and tossed it to the waiting raccoon, who caught it and scampered away, ostensibly to gnaw at it in the safety of its den.

“Good riddance,” Technoblade huffed, and ignored Chat’s wailing about missing a chance to pet the thing. It didn’t matter how fluffy it looked. It probably had rabies, and Technoblade wasn’t going to risk his life just to satisfy Chat’s love for cute animals.

---

This was bad. This was really bad.

*BLOOD FOR THE BLOOD GOD!* Chat howled.

*"Not now,"* he snapped back.

“Drop your weapons,” Quackity snarled, his axe inching closer to Carl’s neck. A bead of sweat rolled down Technoblade’s jaw. Slowly, he loosened his grip on his sword.

A high, chittering cry rose from the forest. Quackity turned towards the disturbance, and was promptly bowled over by two hundred pounds of fur and muscle. The giant raccoon proceeded to hoist the screaming man over his head and hurl him at Fundy, who didn’t dodge fast enough. The two went down in a tangle of flailing limbs and cursing. Ranboo made the smart decision and ran for the hills. Tubbo tried to follow, but the raccoon snagged him by the back of his netherite armor, tossed him on the pile, and proceeded to lie down on all three humans like they were pillows. Technoblade was treated to the dubiously enjoyable sight of watching his enemies get crushed by a 200-pound trash panda. What even was his life now?

“MERCY!” Fundy shrieked, clawing at the snow and trying to struggle out from underneath Quackity. “FUCK-- MERCY!”

The raccoon purred. Technoblade didn’t even know raccoons could purr.

“Uh,” he started. The purring grew louder as the raccoon twisted its head to peer at him. “Looks. . . looks like you have it covered?”

The raccoon stopped purring long enough to chitter what sounded like an affirmative (which was ridiculous, because raccoons weren’t *that* smart) before it tossed Fundy and Quackity onto its back, picked Tubbo up by the scruff of his shirt, and bounded off into the forest on all fours. The only sign of the carnage that had occurred was the trampled snow.

Technoblade would have stood there for a good hour if something hadn't nudged him in the back. He whipped around, expecting an attack, only to see Carl waiting patiently. "Oh," he mumbled. "Right. Uh. Carl. Let's uh, get you back to the stables, yeah? I might have to rebuild those, make 'em more secure so they won't get you again."

Carl nudged him again. Technoblade shoved the raccoon into the back of his mind. He had a new stable to build, and it wasn't like he'd see the raccoon again anyway.

---

The raccoon came back.

And proceeded to consume half his gapple stash. Technoblade let him do what he wanted. He owed him, after all, for saving him from the Butcher Army.

No, Chat. He wasn't getting attached.

---

". . . Huh," Technoblade said.

Steve glanced at him, then laid his head back down again. The large raccoon curled into his side snuggled a bit closer.

"Huh," Technoblade repeated. "Steve, you're adoptin' this guy?"

The polar bear grunted.

*Emotional support raccoon*, Chat chanted. *Emotional support raccoon!*

Technoblade took a deep breath, stared at the two animals for a while, then sighed. "Fine," he grumbled. "Fine, Chat. We'll keep the giant mutated raccoon."

Chat cheered. The raccoon's head jerked up, earning a displeased rumble from Steve. He blinked at Technoblade, then grinned from ear to ear.

Technoblade groaned. "Look Chat, he's gonna be *insufferable* now. Our gapple supply is going to be *destroyed*. Is this what you wanted?"

*Mhm. Yup. Emotional support raccoon? HUGGABLE emotional support raccoon? I see this as an absolute win. WAIT WE NEED TO NAME HIM. OH PRIME GUYS WE FORGOT A NAME. NAME IDEAS GO! Potato! Hahaha funny but also: no. Does Techno have any ideas? YES TECHNO BESTOW A NAME UPON THE RACCOON.*

“Menace,” Technoblade said flatly, “on account of all of you being absolute menaces.”

*Aww he’s breaking out the nicknames! Soft Techno! Technosoft? Technosoft. Technosoft!*

Technoblade looked up at the sky and wondered what he’d done to deserve this.

---

Philza was Done With This Shit™.

Seriously. The dogs, he could understand. The polar bear, he could accept.

A fucking *human sized raccoon*, however, was too much. Seriously. Where the fuck had Techno gotten it?

“Where did you even come from?” he wondered aloud. “The sewers? A lab?”

The raccoon bared its fangs in an angry hiss. Philza took a large step back in case the raccoon tried to claw his face off.

“This is Menace,” Technoblade said. “He showed up in my basement, I fed him, and he never left.”

Menace sniffed and poked him with a blunted claw. Technoblade rolled his eyes.

“Right, right, he fed himself.”

“Ah,” Philza said. “I . . . see.”

If Technoblade noticed the bewilderment in his voice, he didn’t comment on it. “He’s pretty well-behaved, as long as I give him gapples. Here, watch this.” He retrieved a golden apple, opened the door, and hurled it into the distance. Menace dove after it in a streak of gray fur.

Technoblade shut the door, locked it, and covered it with stone. Philza blinked. “. . . Techno?”

Technoblade shrugged. “So. Phil. How’ve you been?”

“Good. . .?”

“Good, good.” At that moment, a loud thud shook the house. The stone blocks over the door shuddered. Technoblade ignored it. “I don’t suppose you’ve had any luck with the diamonds? I’ve been lookin’ for some.”

Philza glanced at the door. “I-- I’ve got a few?” The door rattled again. “Shouldn’t you let him in?”

“Naaah. Shut up, Chat. He’ll track snow inside again, and you know it.”

---

Technoblade stared. Blinked. Stared again.

Menace was sitting on top of the gapple chest. The gapple chest, which Technoblade had *specifically* put in the basement and raccoon-proofed with a stone wall.

“How did you--?” Technoblade shook his head. “Menace. Come here.”

The giant raccoon chittered and didn’t budge a single inch.

“You can’t just-- take my things. Get your own gapples.”

Menace seemed to consider this for a second. Then he gave a very un-raccoon-like shrug, hefted the chest over his head, and bolted.

*“Menace!”*

### **137.** *(credit to Airon and Scribbles)*

“What the fuck is this?”

Dream shrugged, poking one glitter-dusted flower with his foot. “Looks like glitter.”

“I can see that,” George grumbled. “But why is it everywhere?”

Dream looked at the rest of the glitter-dusted field, thought for a moment, then offered, “Allergy season?”

George didn’t dignify that with a reply.

---

“Tommy?”

Tommy looked up from where he’d been sorting through a chest. “Hm? Oh hey, boob boy.”

“Ranboo,” Ranboo corrected automatically. “What’s with the glitter?”

Tommy reached up and brushed a hand over his glitter-dusted hair. “Oh, this? Don’t worry about it.” He went back to sorting through his chest, humming happily.

Ranboo eyed him, his tail twining nervously around one leg. “Oo. . . kay,” he murmured. “I was, uh, wondering if you happened to have any. . . any oak?”

Tommy popped out of the chest, face now dusted with glitter as well. “Oak? Yeah, I think I got some of that, hold on. . .”

He shuffled over to another chest, rummaged around, and came up with a single block of oak - which was completely covered in glitter. He shoved it in Ranboo’s direction. “Here you go, boob boy.”

“. . . Thanks?” Ranboo took it, grimacing at the gritty texture on his palms. “Why is this covered in glitter?”

Tommy stared at him. A chill ran down Ranboo’s spine. There was something. . . unsettling about his expression, but he couldn’t put his finger on it. When he spoke, his voice was monotone and measured, nothing like how he usually sounded. “Because glitter is the best. The greatest thing in existence. Everything must be covered in glitter.”

Then he blinked and shook his head. “That’s all the oak I have. Get the rest yourself, boob boy.”

With that, he turned back to the chest and began digging through it again. Ranboo offered him a nervous goodbye and fled as fast as he could.

---

“Dream?”

“Bwuh--” Dream shot off from where he’d dozed off in the grass, nearly headbutting Niki. The baker hastily backed out of bruising range. “Oh-- hey, Niki.”

“Hi,” Niki returned. “Are you busy right now?”

Dream patted the indent his head had left in the grass. “Nope. Is something wrong?”

“Well, um, you know the glitter?”

“The glitter fields?”

“Yeah, um. I think they’re spreading.”

Dream pushed his mask aside so he could squint up at her. “. . . Spreading?”

“Well, er, the forest is glittery too now.”

Dream opened his mouth. Closed it. Opened it again. “I. . . okay. I’ll look into it.”



Niki smiled, relieved. “Thank you.”

---

Quackity narrowed his eyes at the figure standing motionless on the Prime Path. He was covered in glitter from head to toe, and seemed to be completely spaced out. “. . . Tommy?”

Tommy whipped around. “Quackity!” he cried, an unsettling light shining in his eyes. “What brings you here? Do you want to learn about the glitter?”

“The glitter?” Quackity asked. Tommy’s smile widened. In a flash, he clamped an iron grip around Quackity’s wrist and yanked him forward.

“What the fuck, man?!” Quackity demanded, but Tommy ignored his protests and began sprinkling glitter on Quackity’s head. Quackity tried to pull away, but Tommy’s grip just tightened. What the fuck was this kid eating? Steroids?

Abruptly, Tommy released Quackity. “You must love the glitter,” he hissed. Quackity, mildly terrified, just nodded frantically.

“Yeah. Sure. I love glitter.”

Tommy stared at him for a long moment, then nodded, spun on his heel, and marched away. The moment he was out of sight, Quackity frantically began scrubbing the glitter off of his beanie.

---

“Huh,” Dream said, staring at what had once been the Community House.

“Huh,” Sapnap echoed, then, “What the fuck.”

Dream nudged the edge of the glitter pile with his toe. “Well, at least you can still see the . . . general structure?”

“Dream. It’s *buried* in glitter. I can’t see the fucking floor.”

“General structure,” Dream repeated. “. . . I think this glitter thing might be a problem.”

“You *think*?!”

---

“You must love the glitter.”

Tubbo nodded, taking the bucket of glitter Tommy presented him. “Yeah. Glitter is awesome.”

Ranboo, hidden in a few bushes several feet away, paled and reached for his communicator.

***Group Chat: sic semper ANOTHER CULT***

*<Ranboo>: bad news*

*<Ranboo>: they got tubbo*

*<CaptainPuffy>: OH NO*

*<Quackity>: shit*

*<Quackity>: which one?*

*<Ranboo>: glitter*

*<CaptainPuffy>: less OH NO then*

*<Quackity>: don't celebrate yet. we haven't found a counter for the glitter*

Ranboo started to type out his next reply, only to be interrupted by a voice above him.

“Now what do we have here?”

Ranboo looked up at a glitter-covered Tommy, shrieked, and spontaneously learned how to teleport.

---

***Group Chat: sic semper ANOTHER CULT***

*<Technoblade>: New intel*

*<Technoblade>: the egg cult's gone*

*<Technoblade>: wait the glitter got tubbo?*

*<Technoblade>: L*

*<CaptainPuffy>: the egg cults gone???*

*<Technoblade>: apparently*

*<Awesamdude>: how do you know?*

*<Technoblade>: Halo is standing at my door right now expositing the wonders of glitter*

*<Awesamdude>: .*

*<CaptainPuffy>: what.*

*<Technoblade>: don't worry, the door's locked*

*<Technoblade>: aaaand there go my wolves*

*<Technoblade>: rip*

*<CaptainPuffy>: so youre telling me*

*<CaptainPuffy>: that the glitter cult took over the egg cult*

*<Technoblade>: that's what it looks like, yes.*

*<CaptainPuffy>: so the glitter is more powerful than the egg????*

*<Technoblade>: very likely so*

*<Quackity>: fuck.*

---

“STAY THE FUCK AWAY FROM ME!” Wilbur shrieked, leveling his crossbow at Tommy’s face. “I’LL SHOOT-- I’LL FUCKING SHOOT--”

“Wilbyyyyyy,” Tommy sang. “Don’t you wanna join the glitter cult and be happy forever?”

“NO, FUCK OFF.”

“We have cookies,” Tubbo offered.

Wilbur hesitated, crossbow dipping. Then he brought it up again. “You can’t fool me,” he hissed. “We have Niki on our side. She makes better cookies than anyone on this server.”

Tubbo shrugged. “Worth a shot.”

“Wait,” Antfrost cut in. “Who’s ‘we’?”

“ATTACK!”

Fighters swarmed upon the glitter cult, surrounding them in a matter of seconds. Sam led the charge, face grim as he pointed his sword at Tommy. “Surrender,” he ordered.

In reply, Tommy threw a glitter bomb at them. The fighters dove out of the way like they were avoiding the plague.

“JUST KEEP THROWING GLITTER,” Tommy hollered at the rest of his team. Tubbo obeyed with glee, cackling as he tossed bomb after bomb. Their opponents were forced back, dodging around the blast zones with the desperation of dying men.

“What the heck is going on here?!”

The battle stopped in its tracks. Dream stood at the edge of the clearing, decked out in full netherite. He scowled at them. “I leave for *one week--*”

Tommy threw a glitter bomb at him. Dream flung himself backwards, but it was too late. When the smoke cleared, he was dusted with a fine layer of glitter.

“... Huh,” he said.

“Dream?” Sam called warily. Dream looked up at them. Slowly, he reached up and pushed his mask to the side, revealing the feral grin on his face.

“Run.”

With that warning, Dream summoned a handful of glitter and charged.

### 138. *(credit to curry\_powder)*

“--and when I’ve reduced the rest of this pathetic country to ashes, I’ll line your friends up, and kill them in front of you, one by one, until you’re the only one left. But I won’t kill you. Oh, no, I’ll let you live, knowing that you were responsible for their deaths, all because you just. Wouldn’t. Listen.” Dream tilted his head, his relaxed posture and mild tone at odds with the threats he’d just spouted. “So I’ll ask again. Tubbo. Will you exile Tommy?”

Tommy, whose eyes had glazed over about five minutes into the monologue, blinked out of his fugue. He glanced at Tubbo, Fundy, and Quackity, who were gaping at Dream with undisguised horror.

“I-I--” Tubbo started, apparently at a loss for words. “I don’t--”

Dream hummed. “How about this, then. Tommy, come with me, or I’ll destroy L’Manberg.”

Tommy steeled himself, took a deep breath, and declared, “No.”

“No?” Dream echoed.

“No.”

Dream stared at him for a long, tense moment. Quackity took a step forward, preparing to draw his sword.

And then Dream shrugged. “Understandable, have a nice day.”

The baffled L’Manberg cabinet watched as the man who had threatened to raze their country to bedrock stuck his hands into his pockets and strolled away, whistling a cheerful tune.

“What the *fuck*,” was Fundy’s comment. Tommy collapsed into uncontrollable cackling.

### 139. *the adventures of dreaxter, pt. 8* ( [see previous parts of this loop here](#) )

Dream was calm. Very calm. He’d already talked to Quackity as a ghost. There was no reason to get worked up over this, so if he could stop flickering like a glitchy TV screen, that would be great.

Unfortunately, there was a big difference between talking to Quackity in broad daylight while he covered every inch of Las Nevadas in edible glitter, and talking to Quackity in a dark entrance hall, surrounded by blackstone on three sides and Quackity standing in the exit. The orange sunset wasn’t helping.

Tommy sidled a step closer, positioning himself between Dream and Quackity. Probably for both of their benefits. If Dream lost control, Tommy would have to stop him.

He forced himself to remain still as Quackity’s gaze slid to him. The man’s eyes sharpened. “Oh. Dreaxter.”

“*Qua--*” Dream cleared his throat, his voice crackling like static. He could feel his hoodie fizzling, dangerously close to another transformation. “*Quackity. H-hi.*”

Quackity stared at him for a long, tense moment, then brushed past him. “Ant, Bad, George,” he greeted. “. . . Sapnap.”

“Quackity,” Sapnap returned. “Why are you here?”

Quackity shrugged, stalking up to the unlit portal. “I could ask the same for you. Sam!”

There was no reply.

“He won’t let any of us in,” Sapnap said. Quackity huffed and rolled his eyes.

“Of course he won’t,” he grumbled. “OI! Sam, I know you can hear me! I’m here to grab my stuff, and then I’ll be out of your hair!”

Ant straightened, a wary glint in his eye. “Your ‘stuff’?”

“None of your business,” Quackity snapped.

Dream swayed, dimly aware of the spiderweb cracks worming their way through his mask. Quackity’s tools. That’s what he’d left in the prison. It had to be. Why did he want them back?

“Dream,” Tommy whispered. “Dream, you have to calm down.”

“*C-can’t*,” the ghost hissed. His form glitched, slipping into a prison jumpsuit. Bad whipped around with a startled shout, eyes widening when he caught sight of Dream. Dream clamped down on his emotions, shoving them into a corner. The hoodie reappeared.

“What do you want to do?” Tommy murmured under his breath. By now, the others were turning to them, attention drawn by Bad’s shout. “This is a chance.”

“I . . .”

“Bad?” Antfrost glanced at his fellow guard, eyes narrowed. “What’s wrong?”

Bad swallowed. “I . . . I thought I saw--” he gestured at Dream, his clawed fingers trembling. “Th-that.”

“Saw wha--” George went still. “Oh.”

Dream looked down and realized that his fingers were stained with green. He tried to breathe through it, but the flickering only got worse.

Well, shit.

“I don’t have *time* for this,” Quackity growled, but his frustration was laced with alarm. “SAM! I swear to fucking Prime, open this portal!”

Dream took an unneeded breath, watching with detached curiosity as viridian bloomed across his sleeve. Tommy was talking, but the sound of his voice was drowned out behind the roaring in Dream’s ears. He couldn’t stay here. He had to get out. He had to escape.

Without another word, he turned tail and fled.

---

Well. On a scale of “everything is a-ok” to “FUBAR”, Tommy would rate this a solid “Shit Has Hit The Fan”. Their usual fatalistic humor wasn’t gonna cover this one. Dream was

going to need therapy after this. *Again.*

“That’s it,” Sapnap snarled, storming over to a stunned Bad and grabbing him by the front of his collar. “Give me your keycard. Now.”

Bad blinked down at him, then looked in the direction where Dream had disappeared. He produced his keycard and handed it to Sapnap. “Bad--” Antfrost started, but Bad just shook his head.

“Dream. . . Dream is dead now. There’s no point trying to protect the prison.” Bad took a step back as Sapnap released him. “And. . . I want to know what happened. You-- you heard him screaming, Ant. I know you did.”

“Screaming?” George echoed. Bad winced.

“Screaming,” he confirmed. “I passed by his cell sometimes, and. . .”

Sapnap, eyes alight with cold fury, stalked past Quackity and shoved Bad’s keycard into the slot. The portal rumbled to life.

“Wait--” Quackity started, but Sapnap wasn’t listening. He plunged into the portal, George hot on his heels. Quackity cursed and hurried after them, face twisting into an agitated scowl.

Tommy was left standing in the entrance hall with the two guards. They glanced at each other, then looked at him. “Are you. . .?” Antfrost asked, gesturing towards the portal.

On one hand, following the others would prove entertaining - and he’d be able to report back to Dream about everything that happened. On the other hand, Dream definitely shouldn’t be alone right now. They’d figured out a while ago that being a ghost wasn’t exactly the best for their mental stability, and with how long Dream had been dead this loop, plus the number of emotionally-charged confrontations he’d had. . .

Tommy made his decision. “Nah, I don’t really care how he died. I’ll just go. . . check on Dreaxter, yeah? Good luck with. . . whatever shit you’re doing.”

Antfrost opened his mouth to answer, but Tommy was already hurrying away, following the fading trail of green ectoplasm spotting the ground.

Hopefully, he’d find Dream before he did something drastic.

---

Sapnap stepped out of the portal to find the lobby of the prison was devoid of life. He made a beeline for the next card slot, only to stop short when he realized how many there were.

“Bad,” he snapped. “Which one gets to the main cell fastest?”

“Uh-- this one,” Bad said. He took the keycard and slid it into a slot, then flipped the lever. Part of the wall slid away to reveal a passageway.

The two guards took the lead, escorting them up a staircase that ended in another locked door. If he were any less focused, Sapnap would have stopped to admire the sheer grandeur of the prison, built by one man. As it was, he was currently too angry at everything this prison represented to feel any appreciation.

The next series of hallways opened into a row of lockers. Sapnap swept his gaze across the room, but as with all the previous areas, the Warden was absent. He shrugged off his disappointment and hurried after Bad and Ant. At last, their group came to a fork in the paths. Bad gestured to the door on the left. “That one goes to the security room - Sam’s probably in there. The cell is the other way. Do you. . .?”

Sapnap glanced at George. George wordlessly pointed to the door on the right.

Together, they proceeded down the hall. The walk was fairly short, and within half a minute, they were in front of the main cell. The sea of lava had been drained away, but the cell itself was still too far and dimly lit for Sapnap to see the inside.

Antfrost slipped his keycard in and flipped the levers. “I’ll stay here,” he told them. The only response he got was Bad’s nod.

The platform rumbled to life, and the three of them stepped on. Sapnap noted in the back of his mind that Quackity had disappeared somewhere between the locker room and the main cell, but he pushed that thought aside. He had bigger fish to fry.

The platform ground to a stop. Sapnap kept his gaze on his feet as the three of them stepped off, unwilling to look just yet. He heard the netherite bars slide down as Antfrost recalled the platform.

“Oh,” George choked out. Bad inhaled sharply before he turned away, dry-heaving.

Sapnap grit his teeth, steeled himself, and raised his head.

Dream’s body had already begun to decompose - the humidity and the heat had not been kind to him. The floor of the cell was stained with coppery brown. When Sapnap breathed in, the scent of rotting flesh, underscored with ghast tears and iron, filled his lungs.

Bile rose in his throat. He swallowed it and closed his eyes, forcefully shoving his analytical mind to the forefront. He was here for a reason. He had to figure out what happened.

Sapnap took a deep breath, opened his eyes, and *looked*.

The corpse was propped up against the back wall of the cell, one hand thrown haphazardly over the gash in the front of its bloodied jumpsuit. The cloth itself was almost completely effused with reddish-brown, and when compounded with the bloodstains on the floor around it, the cause of death had likely been blood loss--

*(“I was cold, and tired. Really tired.”)*



--but that didn't explain the sickly-sweet smell. Someone must have used a regeneration potion in here at some point - likely Sam. Maybe Sam had discovered that the prisoner was dying and rushed in, trying to save him. Then when he failed, he locked himself up in the prison and refused to talk to anyone. It seemed like a reasonable explanation.

But then why weren't Dream's wounds healed? Why did Dream have those wounds in the first place? There were no weapons in this cell, nothing Dream could have harmed himself with - which meant that someone else had been here.

"Blades," George said beside him. Sapnap jerked, wheeling around to look at him. George didn't meet his gaze, instead staring intently at the corpse. "The wounds were made by a blade. Smaller than an axe or a sword, bigger than a scalpel. I'd say about the size of a kitchen knife."

". . . No intent to kill," Sapnap added. He shuffled closer to the corpse and squatted next to it. Something wailed in the back of his mind, but he ruthlessly shoved it down. He'd have time for a breakdown afterwards. "The wounds are too shallow. There's a chunk missing, too, right across the shoulder. It's uneven in the middle. . ."

George hummed, his voice monotone. "Two blades."

"Scissors?"

"Too small. Wool shears."

Sapnap pulled up a mental comparison and came to the conclusion that the weapon had indeed been shears. He glanced down. ". . . broken fingers."

"Deliberately broken," George added. "Missing teeth. Cuts along the arms, with the same knife." He nudged the corpse's ankle with the toe of his sneaker. "Slashed Achilles tendons, lacerated soles. Prevents running."

"Bad heard screaming."

"He heard it 'sometimes'. Multiple times."

"Ghast tears, Regeneration. . ."

"Damage to the jumpsuit with no matching wounds."

Sapnap looked up at George, something fiery and *hateful* seething in his chest. George looked back, his eyes colder than ice.

"Torture," they concluded at the same time.

Sapnap rose to his feet. Without another word, he turned on his heel and stalked towards the platform. George fell into step a moment later. Bad made no move to calm them, instead glancing around the cell one last time before following.

The Warden had a *lot* to answer for.

140.

Karl shut the book and pushed it off his lap, watching as it flopped to the floor. It dissolved in a swirl of black magic before it touched the ground, reappearing on the shelf opposite him.

*Inbetween & Other Side - Updated Theory #6* was the last piece he'd needed to complete the puzzle. Whoever had written the book had been on the right track, but they'd disappeared before they could reach the conclusion.

So Karl finished it for them. He'd figured it out. He'd *finally* figured out what the Inbetween was.

It wasn't just a place. No, it was a *being*, a sentient, malicious entity split across multiple timelines that reached out to tempii who wandered too close and dragged them in. It bound them to a single path and twisted their abilities so they could move backwards and forwards along it - but not sideways. Tempii were not meant to move through time. They walked *across* paths, not on them.

Karl remembered his terror when he'd first tried to leave this world, only to find his powers on the fritz. The energy he used for timeline-hopping suddenly ran against him, tearing portals through the fabric and sending him backwards. When he was dumped back into 'present time', he'd passed out from the shock and remained bedridden for nearly a week, fading in and out of consciousness.

To make things worse, he'd been squished into a human form. Being human *sucked*. Even though his body was more durable than a normal human's, he was much shorter than what he was used to. He bled red. He was practically *blind*. Human senses were so limited.

(He missed colors so, so much.)

There was hope, though. One tempus had claimed that with time and a *lot* of travelling, they had wrangled their powers back under their own control. It wasn't enough to break the ties of the Inbetween, but they'd been able to hop outside of the Timeline - if only for a few moments. Their last journal entry had claimed that they would be trying to break the hated white strings, at which point they presumably either lost access to the Other Side or died. Either way, Karl was willing to take the risk - because the alternative was far worse.

The Inbetween was a parasite. It would consume memories, the lifeblood of the tempii, until they became nothing more than a husk, bound to wander through the Inbetween as empty shells until they wasted away. Karl could remember the corpses, dangling like marionettes from the tree. The white strings wrapped around their limbs remained eerily still, despite the breeze rustling the leaves around them. The illusions of the Inbetween had kept Karl from seeing them up until the very end, when he'd made the conscious choice to enter the Other Side.

Karl figured that the Other Side served as a sort of convergence point for the different versions of the Inbetween. The few tempii that managed to find it had used it as an archive,

filling it with records of their own experiences to warn future tempii that found their way in. Karl himself had already left several volumes of notes on what he'd observed.

And now he needed to write his theory. Hopefully, the next tempus trapped here would find it useful.

Shaking out his hands, he crawled to his feet and staggered over to the chest against the wall and pried it open. After retrieving a blank journal and a pen, he sat back and scrawled ***Inbetween & Other Side - Updated Theory #7*** on the cover. After a considering pause, he flipped the front cover open and added, *if you discover anything new, create a new book.*

Taking a deep breath, Karl shook his pen and began to write.

---

When he shut the book, his hand was aching. He slid the book onto the shelf, right beside ***Inbetween & Other Side - Updated Theory #6***, then pulled an extra copy of his updated version of the theory - this one titled ***Inbetween & Other Side - /ʌʀʌ's Theory*** - and ***Journal #31*** from his inventory. Plodding through the long rows of shelves, he stopped beside his current slot and stuffed the two books into their place at the end. They glowed briefly, signifying that the archives had recognized and cataloged them. Karl stared at them for a long moment, then turned on his heel and trudged away.

Time to go home. Time to do it all over again.

He exited the library, shivering as fog swirled around him and sank into his skin. The lack of visibility hardly deterred him - he was long used to navigating the Other Side by now, and while he couldn't walk through it with his eyes closed, he *could* do it with five feet of vision. So he followed the familiar paths, the soles of his sneakers cracking against slick marble. A right turn, another right, then straight ahead and up the stairs to the portal.

He reached the top of the steps and froze in his tracks.

The portal was empty. There was no swirling purple and green, only an obsidian portal frame.

He stared at it, something cold sinking in his chest. "No," he whispered. He reached out and touched the portal frame, then gripped it, running his hands over the inside of the portal, *praying* for it to relight. "No, no, no, *no--*"

Something flashed in the corner of his eye. He whipped around to see a tulip, sitting innocently in a pot. Deja vu washed over him, memories of a time when something similar had happened in another place. In the Inbetween.

The invisible strings around his wrists seemed to tighten. He scratched at them, trying not to hyperventilate. He was supposed to be safe here. He *thought* he would be safe here.

When he blinked, a trail of yellow tulips had appeared. “I’m not following you,” he choked out.

The Other Side rumbled apologetically, but the portal did not relight. Karl stood his ground, hands fisted in his hoodie.

“I’m not following you,” he repeated. “I want to go home. Let me go home.”

More tulips sprang up, wriggling through the cracks between the stones. It was a statement. Either he could wait here, trapped in permanent stasis, or he could follow the Other Side and see what it wanted.

Karl let himself hesitate for ten seconds more. And then he followed.

---

The tulips led him along a path he’d traversed before, around corners and through corridors. He was moving towards a separate library he’d only been in once or twice; this building housed records of the first tempii who’d found their way here. Half of them weren’t in any language Karl understood, and the remaining half were mostly filled with observations he’d already made, so he didn’t come here often.

The trail of tulips didn’t lead him into the archives, though. Rather, they ended at a dead-end wall. He crouched down next to the last one, plucking it from the pot. “What do you want?” he whispered, twirling it between his fingers. “What do you want to show me?”

The building trembled around him. The lantern light glinted off an uneven tile in the floor. Karl squinted, realizing that it was a trigger of some kind.

“You want me to press it?”

The wind hummed an affirmative through the arches. Karl reached out and pressed the tile, watching it sink down. The wall before him rumbled, sliding back to reveal a section of the library that he’d never seen before.

“What. . .” he croaked, rising to his feet. The room was pitch-dark, save for the bubble of light spilling in from the lanterns behind him. Hesitantly, he pulled one off the wall and held it high, revealing rows and rows of bookshelves. They seemed endless, retreating into the darkness.

He moved closer, raising the lantern to the first row of books. They were the same color as his own journals, words scrawled along the brown covers in black ink.

***Journal #1. Journal #2. Journal #3. Journal #4. Journal #5.***

A chill crawled down his spine. He ran the lantern across the shelf, pacing down the row until he reached the end.

There. Right after *Journal #42*, the last book was *Inbetween & Other Side - ʃʌʀʃ's Theory*.

He raised the lantern a bit higher. The row above the one he had been examining was filled with the exact same books, except *Inbetween & Other Side - ʃʌʀʃ's Theory* was sandwiched between *Journal #36* and *Journal #37*.

He raised the lantern higher, revealing an empty shelf. He moved back to the left. This row ended at *Journal #12*.

The next row. He moved along until he found *Journal #95*, then circled around and headed deeper into the gloom. The lantern splashed light across shelves as he passed. He picked a random aisle and slid in, whipping the lantern up to read the spines.

More Journals. More copies of books he had written already.

And with them, more copies of books he *hadn't* written. He'd only traveled thirty-one times - he was *sure* of it. His latest journal had been *Journal #31*. He wanted to believe that *Journal #95* and *Journal #42* and all the other books had been written by some other tempus, a long, long, time ago, but--

--but every single one of the books in this library was labeled in familiar handwriting. *His* handwriting.

“What the *honk* is this?”

## Chapter End Notes

asdkfsd I'm so sorry about the quality of this chapter

[Ghasty duo](#) by Ren, resident father figure of the ot discord server. [Close ups](#)

[Fanart for the cactus cult loop](#) by handdrawnm!!

Also [Cocomere](#) did an inspired thing from this fic in their series [A \(Mostly Benevolent\)](#)

[Server Takeover & The Effects Thereof](#)!! If you like Roleswap AU Dimension Travel

Meet The Originals type fics, I highly recommend this series and its related series'

because it's amazing and severely underrated :D

### Loop Notes

**136.** Tommy's on his Turning Red arc. Yes, he is as fluffy as the red pandas in the movie.

**137.** The Eggpire was cleansed with holy water and bribed to go along with it. Tubbo, on the other hand, didn't need a bribe. The chaos was enough for him.

**138.** This was entirely improvised. Except for the monologue. Dream practiced that bit in front of a mirror.

# Chapter 29

## Chapter Notes

This chapter is dedicated to Smallest, whose prompts make up four pages of my ideas document  
seriously they deserve a cookie

### **Spotlighted Comments**

**nyanbinary\_87:** “He missed colors so, so much.” youre telling me a shrimp timed this line?

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

### **141. (*credit to Smallest*)**

“Don’t be suspicious, don’t be suspicious,” Tommy sang under his breath. He scribbled another line in his notebook. “Don’t be suspicious, don’t be--”

“What are you doing?”

“AGH!” Tommy tried to jump to his feet and turn around at the same time. As a result, he tripped on the bush he was hiding in and tumbled into the snow. He hastily grabbed his notebook and tried to cram it into his back pocket, ignoring the fact that a) the pocket was too small for the book to fit, and b) he had a perfectly functional inventory. “Ahaha! Technoblade! Big man! Fancy seeing you here!”

“I live here,” Technoblade deadpanned.

“Uh-huh. A true coincidence. It’s almost like fate wanted me to be here, eh?” Tommy finished off his word vomit with a wink. Its charisma was diminished by the snow that slipped into his eye. “Ow ow ow fuck--”

Technoblade sighed. “Why are you here, Tommy?”

“I was, uh, bird watching! Yeah! You know, lots of birds in the bushes and whatnot--”

“First of all,” Technoblade raised a clawed finger, “There are almost no birds in this area. Second of all--” he pointed at the ‘bush’ Tommy had been hiding in. “That’s not a bush.”

“Yeah it is!” Tommy held up the handful of sticks and soggy green paper. “See?! It even has leaves!”

Technoblade stared at him. “Tommy, there’s a whole *forest* over there. If you wanted to spy on me, you could have just done it there instead of-- putting a fake bush in the middle of a

stretch of open ground. You're not even dressed up to camouflage with the-- with the bush!"

"So you do admit it's a bush!" Tommy crowed. "And I wasn't spying on you, I was looking for birds."

Technoblade's flat look told him exactly how much he believed that. Which was to say, not at all. "Leave," he ordered.

"Okay, okay!" Tommy gathered up the remains of his 'bush' and scrambled to his feet. He scurried into the safety of the forest. It was only when he could no longer feel Technoblade's glare burning into his back that he slowed, tossed his fake bush aside, and pulled out a communicator.

### ***Private Messaging: Dream***

*<TommyInnit>: phase one complete*

*<TommyInnit>: operation flip the bacon is a go*

---

Technoblade narrowed his eyes at the figure skulking outside his house. Dream was pacing back and forth, leaving a rut in the snow. He'd stop in his tracks occasionally to pivot towards Technoblade's house, where he'd stand, motionless, for exactly thirty seconds (yes, Technoblade counted) before returning to his pacing.

There was absolutely no rhyme or reason for this behavior. Either Dream had severe social anxiety and was attempting to work up the courage to come talk to Technoblade (unlikely; Dream usually just barged into things with all the delicacy of a bull in a ceramics shop), or he'd finally lost his marbles (which was. . . less unlikely, but still unlikely). Either way, his behavior wouldn't be categorized as 'normal'.

Technoblade watched for another five minutes. Just as he was debating whether or not to approach, Dream broke from his routine when, instead of standing still during one of his half-minute house-staring sessions, he began walking towards it. Technoblade felt an irrational jolt of fear when his gaze met Dream's through the windows, but he shook it off.

He watched as Dream knelt by his dog pen, pulled out a notebook (hold on, this seemed *familiar*) and began scribbling furiously in it. Technoblade, fully fed up with the trespasser, donned his netherite armor and stepped out of his house.

"Dream, what--" he called across the snow. Before he could even finish, Dream had shot to his feet, whipped around, and hurled an ender pearl into the distance. By the time Technoblade reacted, he was gone.

---

“Um, Technoblade. . .”

“What?”

Ranboo let out a nervous warble. “Are you, um, going to. . . do anything about. . . them?”

Technoblade’s eye was twitching furiously. “No,” he grunted.

Ranboo glanced at the two figures lurking in the trees. The moment he turned towards them, both whipped out books and pretended to read them. Well, Ranboo was pretty sure they were pretending, because Tommy was holding his upside down. Dream’s wasn’t even in *English*, from what Ranboo could see of the cover.

“They’ve been there,” Technoblade said. “Just ignore them.”

“O. . . kay?”

A leaf crunched behind them. Ranboo risked a peek to see that their two stalkers were following them down the path.

“Are you. . . *sure* we shouldn’t do anything?”

Technoblade shook his head. “Hurry. The faster we get to the church, the faster we get rid of them.”

He sped up. Ranboo sent one last glance backwards, then followed suit.

---

Something was *wrong*.

Technoblade stopped outside his door, every warning bell going off in his head. “Chat?” he hissed under his breath, prodding at the voices in the hopes that they would give him a hint about what was wrong. Nothing rose above the usual murmurs, save for a few loud giggles. Helpful as always.

Technoblade checked that his armor was in place, then drew his sword and pushed the door open. The interior of his house was dark, every window covered in a thick swathe of cloth. Unless Philza had spontaneously decided that he wanted to do some interior decorating, it was likely the work of an intruder.



Warily, Technoblade stepped into the house, the enchantments on his sword casting a violet glow through the darkness. Nothing immediately jumped out at him, so he continued further, nerves pulled taut and ready to react at a moment's notice. He made it through the living room with no incidents, so he ripped the covers off the windows and did another scan of the room.

At which point two people dropped from the ceiling with a shout of, "SURPRISE!" The only thing that saved them from severe maiming was Philza, who stepped in and parried his sword before it reached the intruders. Technoblade recoiled, blinking at him.

"Wh-- Phil?"

Phil disengaged, his sword disappearing in a flash of light. He grinned at him. "Happy birthday, mate."

Slowly, Technoblade lowered his sword, straightening as he took in the rest of his surroundings. The furniture had been draped with multicolored streamers, the walls festooned with garlands of pine needles. A pile of what appeared to be presents was piled on the table usually reserved for his brewing stands.

Dream and Tommy were standing next to it, matching grins pasted on their faces and party hats on their heads. A glance at the ceiling revealed two holes. They must have been lurking there, waiting to get the drop on him.

Technoblade leveled a flat stare at the intruders. "Is this why you've been stalkin' me?"

"Yes," Tommy admitted with no shame whatsoever.

"Happy birthday!" Dream added, punctuating his sentence by setting off a party popper. A sad shower of glittery confetti puffed into the air. Philza started cackling.

Technoblade felt his eye twitch. "Get out of my house."

"But we made you a cake! And got you presents!" Tommy flailed an arm in the general direction of a large box sitting amongst the other presents. It was 'wrapped' (Technoblade was using the term generously, because that was the poorest excuse of a wrapping job he'd ever seen) in bacon-printed paper. If the cake wasn't bacon-themed as well, Technoblade would eat his cape. Without salt.

"Get out," he repeated, raising his sword. Dream offered him a cheery salute, grabbed Tommy by the arm, and hightailed it before either of them got stabbed.

**142.** *(credit to Smallest)*

***TW: Suicidal ideation***

"Do it, Phil."

“Wilbur, please, I can’t--”

“Kill me!”

“Wil--”

“KILL ME PHIL! KILL ME!”

With an anguished cry, Philza plunged the sword into Wilbur’s heart. Wilbur’s mad laughter cut off in a gurgle as blood filled his lungs. He reached out even as his eyes glazed over, hands curling in the cloth of his father’s haori, and Philza choked on a sob. With his free arm, he pulled Wilbur into an embrace, cradling the back of his son’s head as his blood stained his sleeves.

And then an ender pearl shattered next to Philza. A stranger appeared, dressed in a tattered green cloak stained with blood. He took in the scene with a glance, then scowled.

“Oh no you don’t,” he hissed. He knelt by the corpse, ignoring Philza, and began chanting-- *something*.

It was no language Philza had ever heard, and when one was as long-lived as he was, there were *very few languages* he had not heard. But even if he couldn’t understand the words, the eldritch syllables that rolled off the man’s tongue raised hairs along his arms. Philza tried to shy away, to protect Wilbur from whatever sorcery was surely being done, but he couldn’t move.

The stranger kept chanting, voice reaching a crescendo. As the final word rang through the air, he reached out, grabbed ahold of air, and *pulled*.

Philza’s son dissolved into smoke in his arms. For a moment he stared, disbelieving. And then comprehension dawned, soon followed by anger.

“What did you do?” he rasped, turning to the stranger. His mangled wing *burned* as his wings puffed up, but he barely noticed the pain. “What the *fuck* did you do to Wilbur?!”

The stranger raised his hands. “He’s--”

“Give him back,” Philza snarled. “*Give him--*”

“Are you fucking serious,” a voice said behind him.

Philza’s head snapped around so quickly, it was a miracle that he hadn’t broken his neck. “W-Wil?”

Wilbur stepped out from behind a jagged stone outcropping created by the explosion. The movement knocked over a pile of rubble, which rolled away to reveal the bed hidden behind it.

“Are you. Fucking. Kidding me.” Wilbur punctuated each sentence with another step forward. Philza rose on shaking legs, but Wilbur merely brushed past him, heading straight

for the stranger.

“I was *dead*, Dream,” he seethed. “That was supposed to be my last life.”

“Uh-huh,” the stranger-- *Dream* said. “And I brought you back. You’re welcome.”

Wilbur spluttered. “I-- you-- this was-- I didn’t want to be brought back! I wanted to fucking *die* and *stay dead*, Dream, or did you miss the part where I was yelling at Phil to kill me?!”

Dream pushed his mask aside. Based on the way Wilbur recoiled, Philza could assume that this wasn’t a common occurrence. However, it did make his eye roll very visible. “Yes, very dramatic. I was almost impressed by how tragic it was, except--” he jabbed a finger at Wilbur, “--one, your death was helpful to exactly nobody - rather inconvenient, actually - and two, you have a chance to heal and you threw it away. Like the overdramatic theater kid you are.”

“Now listen here, you bastard--”

“Oh, and making your dad kill you? Dick move.” Dream nodded. “And now that Philza here is no longer under the immense stress of having his son encouraging him to unalive him, I am sure he has a *lot* he’d like to say to you.”

Slowly, Wilbur turned to face him. Philza found himself gaping at his son, unable to form words. Everything had happened so quickly, his mind was still reeling.

“W-Wil,” he stammered. Wilbur stared at him for a moment, then abruptly spun on his heel and headed for the cliff.

“Nope,” he snapped. “I can’t do this. I’m not doing this.”

“You are,” Dream corrected cheerily. He grabbed Wilbur by the back of his coat and yanked him away from the edge. “And you better get used to talking, because you are getting *so* much therapy after this.”

Wilbur was unceremoniously shoved back in Philza’s direction. Still, he refused to make eye contact, instead glaring at the floor like it had personally offended him. “Just get it over with,” he muttered.

Philza gathered the shattered remains of his composure and drew himself up. “Wilbur, it’s. . . it’s going to be okay.”

A loud *crunch* shattered the silence. Philza, Wilbur and Dream all turned to see a dust-covered Tommy raising another handful of popcorn (how the fuck had he gotten *popcorn* in the middle of a war?) to his mouth. He paused when he realized that they were looking at him. “Oh no, don’t mind me. This is the best shit I’ve seen in years.”

Philza didn’t know how to address that. So he didn’t. “We can help you, Wil. We’re *going* to help you. I don’t know what happened, and I don’t know why, but *please--*”

Wilbur let out a noise of alarm as Philza staggered forward, shielding his face with one hand and reaching out with the other. The brunette caught his father almost on autopilot, and was instantly dragged into a rib-crushing hug. “Urk-- Phil-- Dad?”

Philza let out a strangled sob. “*Please* never do that again,” he whispered. “I don’t know what I’d do if I lost you.”

Wilbur stammered, at a loss for what to say. Eventually, he gave up and just slumped into the hug, neither returning nor fighting it. Philza hugged him all the tighter, pressing his face into Wilbur’s shoulder and feeling him *breathing* and *alive*.

“Um. . .” a voice spoke up behind him, wavering and uncertain. “Is this. . . uh. . .”

“Puffy! How’d you find us?” Green flashed in his vision as Dream brushed past him. Philza loosened his hold enough to poke his head out of the hug and get a glimpse of what was going on. When Wilbur tried to completely break away, Philza tightened his grip. Wilbur winced and stopped fighting.

“I just. . . followed the smoke,” ‘Puffy’ said, sounding mildly disturbed. Philza twisted to get a good look at her, and was mildly surprised to see a short woman with frizzy two-toned hair. “Why does this place look like it was nuked?”

Dream winced. “Because. . . it was. Blown up, I mean. Not nuked. Yet.”

“Let’s just say we’re all gonna need a shit-ton of therapy,” Tommy piped up. He shoved another handful of popcorn in his mouth and proceeded to chew noisily.

Puffy stared at him, then looked at the smoking remains of L’Manberg and visibly gathered herself. “O. . . kay. Is that why I was invited to the server?”

“No, actually. Though if you do know anything about therapy--” Dream threw a significant glance at the smoking crater outside, “--I’m sure a lot of people would be willing to pay for a session or two.”

“. . . Alright. I’ll still need a couple days to set up shop and get to know everyone, but I can mark down a few appointments ahead of time.” She smiled wryly. “At least I can put my degree to use.”

Philza tightened his grip on Wilbur, pasted a plastic smile on his face, and cleared his throat. Wilbur stiffened, realizing what was about to happen. “Phil,” he hissed, panic clear as he tried to wiggle out of the hug. “Phil, no.”

“Could I get an appointment for my son?”

Wilbur let out a longsuffering groan and turned his face towards the ceiling of the cave. Philza squeezed him in retaliation, his grin widening at Wilbur’s yelp of “My ribs!” followed by a series of expletives.

Puffy visibly restrained herself from asking questions, instead giving him a sharp nod of her head. “Would. . . three days from now work? I should have a place set up by then.”

“Perfect,” Philza chirped. He hugged Wilbur a bit tighter, and the protest that had been rising in the man’s throat died in a squeak of air. “Morning or afternoon?”

“. . . I’ll get back to you on that.” At Philza’s acquiescence, Puffy turned to Dream. “Anything I need to know before I start building?”

“Avoid TNT,” Dream advised. “And stay away from L’Manberg. Unless you like property damage, in which case feel free to build nearby.”

Puffy rubbed her forehead. As a fellow new member on the server, Philza could relate. “. . . You know, Dream, when you invited me, this was not what I was expecting.” She held up a hand before Dream could speak. “No. Don’t even. Come find me *after* you’ve had a shower and a full night’s sleep, and explain to me *exactly* what happened on this server. Capiche?”

Dream opened his mouth. Closed it. Let out a defeated sigh. “Yes, Puffy.”

“Good.” With that, the sheep hybrid spun on her heel and disappeared into the tunnel. Philza watched her go with no small amount of curiosity. She clearly was not a woman to be reckoned with.

Wilbur shifted, abruptly reminding Philza of the situation at hand. “Phil? Will you let go now?”

“No.”

“Oh for fuck’s sake--”

**143. (credit to Smallest)**

“AAAAAAAAAAAAA--”

**“Dream--”**

“--AAAAAAAAAAAAA--”

**“Dream.”**

“--AAAAAAAAAAAAA--”

**“Oh, for fuck’s sake.”**

“--AAAAAA-- HCK! Ow ow ow-- what was that for?!”

**“For being a bitch. Now will you stop screaming and listen?”**

“You can’t sneak up on me like that and expect me *not* to scream! What the fuck did you even do to yourself?!”

**“Another botched hybrid attempt,”** Tommy admitted. He wiggled his deformed limbs. **“Drank half a spider potion, but the DNA mix is pretty random so I’m a bit. . . uneven. Looks pretty cool, eh?”**

Dream stared at him for approximately three seconds before shuddering and looking away. Coward. “Have you. . . tried milk?”

**“Nope, and I’m not gonna.”** Tommy smiled, his chelicerae parting to reveal inhumanly sharp teeth in an otherwise human mouth. **“I’m going to be the server cryptid this loop. This is a *perfect* opportunity to fuck with people.”**

“. . . Well, yes,” Dream said. “But have you considered how dangerous it might be to scare a server full of traumatized people?”

Tommy snorted. **“They’ll be too busy trembling in fear to try to kill me.”** At Dream’s dubious stare, he rolled his eyes. **“Relax. What’s the worst that could happen?”**

---

**“KILL IT WITH FIRE!”**

**“Oh shit-- Tubbo! Chill! Tubbo put that down-- it’s me! It’s Tommy!”**

**“A LIKELY STORY!”**

Tommy was forced to dive aside as another gout of flame scorched the area where he’d been. Seriously, where did Tubbo get a *flamethrower*? **“I messed up a potion!”** he babbled.

**“Fuck-- Tubbo, stop trying to roast me!”**

**“YOU CAN’T HAVE MY SOUL, DEMON!”**

**“I’m not a demon! What the fuck do I have to-- OH FUCK!”** Tommy scrambled to the side, narrowly avoiding a plume of fire. He didn’t want to become an extra-crispy spiderman kebab. **“TUBBO, IT’S ME! WOMEN! PRIMES! HOT GIRL!”**

The next attack never came. Tubbo cautiously lowered the flamethrower, eyes round with something between awe and horror.

“. . . Tommy?”

Tommy practically melted to the ground with relief. **“Thank fuck. Yeah, Tubs, it’s me. I had a potion accident.”**

Tubbo squinted. “What kind of potion does *that*?”

**“Well--”**

“Tubbo?!” The door slammed open to admit one Ranboo Beloved into the mansion. “Tubbo, why is the house on fi-- WHAT IS THAT.”

**“Hi, Ranboob.”**

Ranboo gaped at him, stammered for a moment, and promptly fell backwards in a dead faint.

**“Wimp.”**

---

“NOPE NOPE NOPE NOPE!” Karl yeeted another book at Tommy. It missed by a mile and crashed into his desk, knocking over an inkpot. Tommy hissed and scuttled up the wall, eliciting a high-pitched shriek.

The door slammed open and Sapnap stormed inside, axe in hand. “Karl! I heard screaming whAT THE FUCK IS THAT?!”

“I DON’T KNOW!” Karl wailed.

**“Ayup,”** Tommy greeted.

Sapnap nearly dropped his axe. “IT TALKS?!”

“I DON’T *KNOW!*”

**“I like women.”**

“IT TALKS!” Sapnap screamed. Tommy cocked his head a *little* too far to the side. This apparently was the last straw for Sapnap, who screeched like a dying parakeet and hurled his axe at him.

That was his cue to go. **“I’ll be back,”** Tommy hissed. He then (to the horror of his audience) tore through the wall with his bare. . . hands? Feet? And retreated into the shadows of the night. Karl and Sapnap were left staring at the decimated West Wall of the library.

“. . . What the fuck.”

Karl began laughing hysterically.

---

***MODEL: ALPHA-03***

**DESIGNATION:** SAM\_NOOK

**STATUS:** [PASSIVE]

**ENERGY:** [LOW]

**MODULES:**

>MOD\_SIGHT<

>MOD\_AUDIO<

>MOD\_WORDS<

>~~MOD\_SPEECH~~<

>~~MOD\_MVMT~~<

[expand].

MISSION:

1. ~~PROTECT <TOMMYINNIT>~~ >MOD\_MVMT< MUST BE ACTIVE TO ACHIEVE THIS MISSION

2. MONITOR THE HOTEL

> MAINTAIN PASSIVE OBSERVATION OF HOTEL ACTIVITY UNTIL ENOUGH ENERGY HAS BEEN RETAINED FOR ACTIVATION

> CONDUCT CHECKS AT INTERVALS OF [00:05:00]

> RECORD SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

[ACTIVITY LOG]

[09:10:00] NO ACTIVITY DETECTED.

[09:15:00] NO ACTIVITY DETECTED.

[09:20:00] NO ACTIVITY DETECTED.

[09:23:06] >MOD\_SIGHT< DETECTS MOVEMENT BY A HUMANOID FIGURE. INTRUDER IDENTIFIED AS <JACK\_MANIFOLD>.

[09:23:31] <JACK\_MANIFOLD> ENTERS HOTEL.



*[09:25:00] NO ACTIVITY DETECTED.*

*[09:26:45] >MOD\_AUDIO< DETECTS A MUFFLED BANG.*

*[09:26:46] >MOD\_AUDIO< DETECTS A HUMAN VOICE. >MOD\_WORDS< IDENTIFIES PHRASE AS A 83.2 DECIBEL VOCALIZATION OF "OH FUCK NO" BY <JACK\_MANIFOLD>.*

*[09:26:50] >MOD\_AUDIO< DETECTS CONTINUOUS VOCALIZATIONS OF EXTREME DISTRESS FROM <JACK\_MANIFOLD>.*

*[09:26:52] <JACK\_MANIFOLD> EXITS HOTEL AT HIGH VELOCITY AND LEAVES VIEW. >MOD\_AUDIO< DETECTS CONTINUOUS VOCALIZATIONS OF EXTREME DISTRESS FROM <JACK\_MANIFOLD>.*

*[09:30:00] NO ACTIVITY DETECTED.*

---

"There is an eldritch being on the Needle!"

Purpled barely restrained a flinch of surprise at the sudden comment. He turned to Slimecicle. "What?"

"There is an eldritch being on the Needle!" Slimecicle pointed at the Needle. Purpled followed his gaze and saw that there was indeed a large. . . black. . . *thing* hanging off the side of the tower.

". . . Huh," Purpled said.

"Should we alert Quackity from Las Nevadas?"

The large black thing *moved*, scuttling about three feet up the side of the Needle. Then it twisted its body at an anatomically impossible angle and looked straight at them.

". . . Nah," Purpled decided. He wasn't paid enough for this shit.

**144.** *(credit to Smallest)*

"Everyone ready?"

Wilbur plucked at the collar of his coat, a scowl on his face. "Are you *sure--* "

"A hundred percent, big man. 'Sides, I told you Dream'll play along. Worst comes to worst, we just pearl away and run like hell."

“Question,” Fundy called as he stumbled out of the van, pulling at his sleeves. “How did you know our exact sizes? Did you shrink us in another loop or something?”

“Nah, I tested out proportions an’ shit on myself and made guesses based on your sizes. It worked out pretty well.” Tommy beamed at them, then swept a stick up from the ground. “Better get your weapons ready, ‘cause Dream’s gonna be here any minute.”

The five L’Manbergians arrayed themselves in defensive positions on either side of the gates (some with more hesitance than others). Tommy motioned for the others to be quiet, then cocked his head. They all heard the footsteps in the distance, growing steadily louder.

Dream stepped through the gates, shield and sword raised. He scanned his surroundings, wary, then made as if to turn around.

“ATTACK!”

Dream was bowled over by an angry child, who proceeded to sit on his chest while the other four pinned his limbs down. “Surrender, tyrant!” Tommy declared, pointing his pointy stick at Dream’s face. “You have been defeated!”

“Why are you a child,” said Dream.

Tommy beamed at him. “Because it’s fun! Will you play with us?”

Dream opened his mouth. Closed it. Turned to Wilbur, who had a firm grasp on his right arm. “Did you agree to this?”

“Yes,” Wilbur admitted.

“Why?”

“. . . Tommy made some very persuasive arguments,” was all Wilbur could say. Dream inhaled through his nose, glanced at the miniature Tubbo pinning his left arm down, and closed his eyes.

“Fuck it. Sure, I’ll play with you, if you can get a picture of Sapnap’s face when he sees us.”

“Deal,” Tommy chirped, and shoved a potion down Dream’s throat.

---

“Why didn’t he tell us he was going ahead?!”

“I don’t *know*,” George snapped. “It should be alright, Dream can hold his own--”

“Dream’s a good fighter, but he can’t hold out forever in a four-v-one,” Punz interrupted. He sped up. The other two followed his lead.

Sapnap pulled ahead, soon overtaking Punz. He burst through the gates into L'Manberg, decked out in armor and fully expecting to find Dream fighting for his life.

Instead he found five children battling at each other with sticks.

“Surrender!” Mini-Dream shrieked.

“Never!” Mini-Wilbur shrieked back, and proceeded to lunge at him with a stick. Mini-Dream squealed and parried with his own stick, then retaliated. He was outnumbered four-to-one, but somewhere in the fray he’d managed to acquire a *second* stick and was doing a decent job of beating the other children back.

Sapnap felt George and Punz come to a stop behind him. “What,” George said.

The fight fell apart as its participants turned to stare at the newcomers. Mini-Dream brightened at the sight of them. “George! Sapnap! Punz!”

“What,” George repeated, then added “the fuck” for good measure.

“We’re playing Revolution!” Mini-Dream beamed up at him. “Will you play with us?”

George just stared back, at a loss for words. Meanwhile, a miniaturized Wilbur Soot marched up to them.

“That’s not fair!” he cried. “You can’t have grown-ups on your team!”

“Can too!” Mini-Dream argued back.

Punz lowered his sword. “I’m not doing this,” he declared, turned on his heel, and marched out of L'Manberg. Sapnap had half a mind to follow him, but before he could, something tugged on the cloth of his pant leg. He looked down to see Mini-Dream.

“Play with us,” the child insisted.

Sapnap glanced back at George for help. Unfortunately, George had been stunned into silence. Sapnap was forced to scramble for an excuse.

“U-uh, isn’t it unfair to the others?”

“I can play on their side,” Mini-Dream chirped, and Sapnap could’ve *sworn* that the child had just flashed an evil smile at him. “That’ll make it fair!”

“But what if we don’t want to play with you?”

Dream’s eyes widened. His lower lip began to tremble.

Ohhhh shit. “I was joking!” Sapnap yelled. “We’ll play with you!”

Dream’s puppy dog eyes melted into a wide grin. “Yes!” he cheered, and dashed over to the other children (presumably to plot).

“Do something,” Sapnap hissed at George. George shot him a look and gestured at the gang of feral children now approaching them with sharp, pointy sticks.

“You want me to fight *that*?”

Needless to say, the two soldiers found themselves corralled into various games for the rest of the day. Unbeknownst to them, it would be the start of a beautiful political alliance.

**145.** (*credit to Smallest*)

***TW: Referenced suicidal ideation***

He clambered onto the ledge and rubbed his hands together, wincing as his bones ached in anticipation. The pockmarked landscape seemed to sway below him. He took a deep breath and steeled himself. He could do this. He’s done it before. He just needed to calculate the angle right, and it’d be pretty much painless.

“Oh,” Someone gasped behind him, quiet and panicked. When they spoke, their voice was trembling. “Tommy, maybe. . . do you want to get down from there?”

Tommy blinked and turned around. It was Eret, dressed in full royal regalia and eyes wide behind his sunglasses. He was half-crouching, hands hovering in the air like he didn’t know what to do with them.

Well. This was unexpected.

“Ayup,” Tommy greeted. He glanced down at the bottom of the crater. Behind him, Eret’s breath hitched. Tommy sighed. “Would you believe me if I said this isn’t what it looks like?”

“Tommy,” Eret said, and there was such *fear* in his voice that Tommy flinched. “Please get down from there.”

Tommy slid off the ledge. The moment his feet touched solid ground, Eret was upon him, hands wrapping around his wrists and tugging him away from the edge. “You’re okay,” the monarch breathed. “It’s going to be okay.”

“It’s not-- I wasn’t trying to kill myself,” Tommy protested. It fell upon deaf ears. “Seriously, Eret-- hey, no-- let go--”

“Tommy, you were about to jump off a *cliff*,” Eret hissed. “There isn’t-- you--” he took a deep breath. “*Prime*, Tommy. I know you don’t-- trust me, not after I betrayed you, but-- if you need to talk--”

“Eret, I promise I wasn’t gonna-- it was for-- something else.”

Eret stared at him. “What else would you try to throw yourself off a cliff for?”

. . . And therein lay the issue. If he wanted to explain why he wanted to become a ghost, he’d have to explain the loops. Which meant a long-winded explanation that Eret would forget by the next loop, which was just plain annoying. But also, dealing with a misconception that he’d been about to do *that* would be troublesome as well.

He was still debating about the merits of revealing the loops when Eret pulled out a comm. Shit, Tommy must have been silent for too long. “Eret--”

“I’m calling Tubbo,” Eret soothed in a calming voice that Tommy would have found grounding if he’d actually been considering suicide. But he wasn’t, so it was just very irritating. “Tommy, we’re going to help you, I promise.”

Tommy contemplated the merits of throwing himself off the cliff, if only to avoid the upcoming conversation. Eret must have noticed him side-eyeing the ledge, because he casually slid in front of it. “Tubbo?” he said into the comm.

“*Hey Eret.*” Tubbo sounded distracted. “*What’s up?*”

Eret met Tommy’s gaze. “I’m. . . I’m with Tommy right now. He just tried to. . . jump into the L’Manberg crater.”

Tommy winced as a loud crash burst from the comm, followed by the sound of shattering glass. “*He what?!*”

“Tried to, ah, kill himself,” Eret said quietly. Tubbo fell silent for several long, tense seconds. Then he sighed.

“*Okay. That-- okay. Get. . . get him away from the crater, yeah? Take him to-- to the church. I’ll meet you there.*”

The call ended with a beep. Eret offered Tommy a strained smile and held out a hand. “Come on. Let’s go to the church.”

Tommy snorted. “I’m not a little kid, Eret. I don’t need to hold hands.”

“Humor me. Please?” Eret asked, calm and *so fucking patient*. Tommy rolled his eyes and begrudgingly took Eret’s hand. The monarch’s smile grew a little bit more genuine.

As they began heading towards the Prime Path, Tommy mentally groaned at the thought of the conversation ahead. If he hadn’t gotten those ideas for Toast, none of this would have happened.

Note to self: try to keep Toast restricted to Exile or prison loops. The risk of getting caught and fussed over was too great otherwise.

If any of you ever need help, please reach out to a trusted friend or family member or call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-8255. You are loved.  
On a less serious note, I'm going thru some stuff right now so I'm sorry if this chapter isn't very funny. Thank you all for reading to the end anyway <3

[Fanart for assorted loops](#) by bdouble0w0!!! :D Karl's panel is hilarious--

### **Loop Notes**

**142.** Philza didn't let go of his son for a long, long time. Tommy laughed at Wilbur's misery.

**143.** I hope you're not too fond of your kneecaps, because he's coming for them.

**144.** L'Manberg won independence through a game of Sardines. SMP-L'Manberg relations thrived, built on spontaneously organized bouts of 'childish' games that everyone on the server participated in. It was a fun loop.

**145.** "They're being all-- weird and-- mushy and nice, Dream, I dunno how to deal with this shit-- It's not like I'm actually. . . y'know. Don't give me that look! I'm fine!"

# Chapter 30

## Chapter Notes

thank you all so much for the support. you're all amazing and ily all so much (/p). and dw, i am doing much better now!!

I hope all of you are also feeling better <3 remember to hydrate!

on another note, this fic is a year old :D

### Spotlighted Comments

**Ren:** Oh shit- He was trying to Toast himself. That's a sentence I never thought I'd feel so incredibly sad over.

**aliendxde:** tommy: i want to become my ghost self for some shenanigans

eret: i'm about to ruin this man's whole career

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

### 146. (*credit to Nife for the micronation name!*)

“So let me get this straight. You made a micronation - a ‘*small country*’ - and named it ‘Big Town’?”

“Choke on your tongue and die.”

“Why child, I thought you’d be happy to see me,” Wilbur drawled. He leaned casually against the wall surrounding the settlement, only to have his feet kicked out from under him. “You fucker--”

“First of all,” Tommy began, “the age of adulthood in Big Town is sixteen, so you can’t call us children. Second of all, all elderly are banned from Big Town and must be punted on sight.”

“Right,” Wilbur snorted. “And who are the elderly?”

“Everyone Dream’s age and older.”

Wilbur raised an eyebrow. “That’s rather selective.”

“You got a problem with that, bitch boy?”

“Tommy!” Tubbo tumbled through the gate before Wilbur could answer, a harried-looking Ranboo on his heels. “We finished plating your house, come take a look!”

“Plating?” Wilbur asked. Tubbo took one look at him and lunged, only to be dragged back by Ranboo.

“Wait wait wait!” the enderman hybrid yelped. “He’s not *in* Big Town! You don’t need to punt him!”

Tubbo considered this for a moment, then shrugged. “Okay, but do we need a reason to punt Wilbur?”

“No,” Tommy chirped. Ranboo hastily tucked Tubbo under one arm and grabbed Tommy before he could enact physical violence upon Wilbur.

“I am *so* sorry,” he said, then screamed and dropped both of his friends when sharp teeth dug into his arm. “Ow! Tommy!”

Tommy sat up, spat out a mouthful of grass, and grinned. “S what you get for pickin’ me up.”

“You just-- you just bit me!”

“You got a problem with that?”

Ranboo stared at him in horror. “That-- you shouldn’t have been able to in the position you were in-- how--”

“Spines are a social construct.”

Wilbur snorted. “The child--”

“Not a child!”

“--views everything as a social construct. Including basic manners.”

“Oh fuck you, you bitch. I’m polite. The politest. All the women love me--”

“Tommy,” Ranboo groaned. Tommy flipped him off.

Wilbur waved away Ranboo’s apologetic look. “I’m used to it. So what’s this about plating Tommy’s house?”

In answer, all three inhabitants of Big Town pointed to the structure looming over the wall. It was a tower of sorts, but the material it had been made out of was completely hidden under the thick layer of music discs tacked on every surface.

Wilbur stared at it. “That’s an. . . interesting. . . tower.”

“That’s an interesting face,” Tommy retorted. Ranboo choked on air.

“Burn,” Tubbo whispered, then started cackling at the look on Wilbur’s face.

---



“I’m not joining your stupid micronation!”

Tommy squinted and raised the megaphone again. “BUT WE HAVE HOME AND VEHICLE INSURANCE!”

“LEAVE!” Purpled shouted back. He ripped one of the Big Town recruitment flyers off the arrow that pinned it to his UFO, balled it up, and tossed it at Tommy. Of course, being the sharpshooter was, he nailed his target in the head. Tommy scowled.

“YOU CAN’T AVOID US FOREVER, PURPLED!”

Purpled answered by pulling out a crossbow. Tommy decided that a tactical retreat was in order, but not before he let Purpled know that he wasn’t conceding defeat.

“I WILL BE BACK,” he warned. “THAT IS NOT A THREAT, IT IS A PROMISE.”

Purpled raised the crossbow. Tommy ran for his life.

---

“Can he join?”

Tommy looked at Ranboo. Then he looked at Slimecicle, who beamed and waved enthusiastically. A bit of his arm came off and splattered on the floor.

“Hello!” he burbled. “I’m Slimecicle! I am a human made of bones and flesh!”

“. . . Right,” Tommy said. “How old are you?”

“Over five millennia, I think! But I came out of the ground three days ago!”

Tommy turned to Ranboo. “Ranboo. My friend. My fellow citizen of our glorious micronation. Where the *fuck* did you find this guy?”

Ranboo shrugged. “He. . . actually found me? In the caves under the mountains.”

“And what were you doing there?”

In answer, Ranboo pulled out a stack of diamonds. Tommy stared at him for a long moment, then held up a hand.

“Okay, let me get this straight. You went mining, found a stack of diamonds, *and* an eldritch entity?”

“I . . . guess?”

“Ranboob, you have *so* much main character energy.”

---

Slimecicle ended up becoming Big Town’s first honorary member. He would visit the micronation every other day or so, and spend the rest of his time exploring the server.

. . . Tommy may or may not have told him that a proper greeting was to throw glitter at people.

Needless to say, Slimecicle had developed quite a *reputation* by the third week of his aboveground existence.

---

“I come bearing gifts,” Dream called. “Can I come in?”

“ENTER AND BE PUNTED,” Tommy boomed through his megaphone.

Dream held up a wad of papers. “But I have blueprints for glitter cannons!”

Tommy glanced back at his two friends. “Do we want glitter cannons?”

Ranboo automatically turned to Tubbo, who *smiled*. Tommy felt a chill go down his spine.

“R-right,” he stammered, then turned back to Dream. “HAND OVER THOSE BLUEPRINTS.”

“Can I come in?”

“NO. GIVE US THE BLUEPRINTS, OR YOU WILL BE PUNTED.”

Dream seemed to consider this for a moment, then shrugged and acquiesced to their demands. Tommy met him at the gate and swiped the packet from his hands. He flipped through them, then looked at Dream.

“I’m gonna give these to Tubbo.”

Dream raised an eyebrow. “That’s a risky move.”

“When has that ever stopped us?”

---

Tommy returned to his friends, blueprints in hand. Tubbo took one look at them and began cackling like a maniac.

The other two inhabitants of the micronation exchanged glances and left him to it.

---

“Why,” Ranboo said, staring at their new mechanized defense system, which involved glitter cannons, glitter catapults, and *a fucking glitter nuke launcher Tubbo what the fuck*. Tubbo smiled sheepishly and hit the button on the remote. The weapons sank back into the ground with a loud rumble, concealed from sight.

“In my defense. . . I was left unsupervised?”

**147.**

“Dream. Dream. Homeless green teletubby. Wake the fuck up *right now*.”

Dream groaned as he clawed his way into wakefulness. “Wha. . .?” he slurred.

Tommy’s face came into view above him. He was smiling, but his eyes were a tad too wide for the expression to be cheerful. “Dream, I did a thing.”

“Hrmm. . .” Dream tried to shake off his grogginess, with minimal success. His next words were broken by a yawn. “What. . . did you do?”

“Aha, so--” Tommy cleared his throat-- “You know how I was experimenting with wardens and withers in the egg room?”

Dream did vaguely recall Tommy saying something about omelette creation via hostile mobs. He’d been awake for two days at that point, so it hadn’t really registered. Now that he thought about it, though. . . couldn’t the Crimson infect mobs?

He snapped fully awake as he realized that the roars, screams, and muffled explosions in the distance were not, in fact, the usual ambient noise of the server. His eyes narrowed.

“What happened.”

Tommy smiled sheepishly. “I. . . might have kickstarted the apocalypse?”

There were three seconds of silence as Dream parsed that out, then three more as he comprehended their meaning.

“ . . . You fucking *what--* ”

**148.** (*credit to Ori and Gabriel*)

“Wilbur?”

Wilbur paused, looking up from the map he had been poring over for the better part of an hour. “ . . . Eret? What’s up?”

Eret clasped his hands behind his back and set his shoulders like a soldier preparing for battle. “Something’s wrong with Tommy.”

Wilbur nearly flipped his chair in his haste to stand. “Where is he?! Is he okay?!”

“It’s . . . I’m not sure.” Eret grimaced. “He’s just-- honestly, it’ll be easier if you just come see for yourself.”

---

Wilbur followed Eret around the corner, coming face to face with an odd sight. Fundy had Tommy locked in a Full Nelson and was desperately trying to maintain his hold while preventing his toes from getting stepped on. Tommy, for his part, just kept walking forward, doing his damndest to drag Fundy with him.

“What the fuck are you doing?”

Tommy didn’t react, almost as though he hadn’t heard Wilbur. Fundy, however, jumped like he’d been shocked and released Tommy. “D-dad!” he stammered. “Something’s wrong with him!”

“He looks fine to me,” Wilbur said. Tommy proceeded to walk directly into the wall surrounding L’Manberg, bounce off, and walk right back into it. “ . . . Ah.”

Fundy yanked Tommy back before he could give himself more brain damage. “As you can see,” he grunted, “he’s not ‘fine’-- OW! OW OW FUCK! MY TOE!”

“He’s been like that for fifteen minutes now,” Eret said while Fundy wailed about his possibly-broken toe. “He only responds when his name is called, and when he does, it’s always just to say ‘L’Manberg is so beautiful at this time of day’.”

“When his name is called?”

Eret sighed. “Tommy!”

Tommy stopped in his tracks, spun to face Eret (swinging poor Fundy around in the process) and beamed. “L’Manberg is so beautiful at this time of day!”

He then proceeded to turn right back around and. . . keep walking into the wall.

“What the fuck,” said Wilbur.

“Indeed,” said Eret.

Wilbur closed his eyes in the hopes that this bullshit was just some stress-induced hallucination. No such luck. When he opened his eyes, Tommy was still trying to become one with the blackstone.

“Tommy, come here,” he said. Fundy’s screech of protest as he was swung around yet again went ignored.

“L’Manberg is so beautiful at this time of day!” Tommy chirped, then turned away. So he didn’t respond to commands, and the walking thing was a problem. They needed a way to move him to an enclosed space. What if. . .?

“Tommy,” he called. The teenager spun to face him, mouth opening to deliver another line, but Wilbur interrupted him. “Tommy.”

As he expected, the teenager closed his mouth, stood still for a couple seconds, then began speaking again. “L’Manber--”

“Tommy.”

“L’Manberg is so beautiful at this time of day!”

So he’d restart the sentence every time his name was repeated. Interesting.

Wilbur turned to Eret. “Where’s Tubbo? Is this happening to him too?”

“I’m. . . not sure. He went caving a little while ago. I’ll message him.”

“Call him back.” Wilbur checked his inventory. Excellent, he had a boat. “We’ll need all the help we can get.”

---

“That’s another shelf done,” Punz called. He replaced the last book at the end of the bookshelf and grabbed another from the next shelf. “I’ll start on this one.”

“Wonderful,” Sapnap groaned, sitting up and peeling the book he’d almost fallen asleep on from his face. “George, can you do another check?”

“Hello Dream,” George said, sounding completely and utterly dead inside. Sapnap could relate. It had been six hours since. . . whatever the fuck happened to Dream had started, and the initial worry had faded into *severe* irritation.

As with the previous five times George had addressed him, Dream’s posture remained unchanged. Only his mouth moved, and even then, it retained the unnerving smile that had been fixated on Dream’s face since he’d started acting strangely.

“Greetings!” he chirped. “Are you here to help?”

Punz sighed and set his book down. “Look, we’ve been at this for six hours. Dream’s not going anywhere like this--” he gestured to the metal cage they had constructed around the man-- “and I think we deserve a break.”

“Urgh. . .” Sapnap rubbed his eyes. “My brain is *fried*. We’ve already gone through half of these, we’ve exhausted every possible option except--”

He paused, his heart sinking into his stomach. Punz side-eyed him. “Except. . .?” he prodded.

“. . . Did we try saying yes?”

Silence descended upon the room, broken only when Punz’s forehead met the table with an audible *thunk*. “Are you serious,” the mercenary griped into the wood.

George just stared straight ahead, a look of pure *resignation* on his face. Almost robotically, he turned to face Dream. “Dream.”

“Greetings! Are you here to help?”

“. . . Yes.”

Dream’s smile widened, showing *teeth*. “Great! I need some materials to defend my land. Please collect a hundred yellow flowers and bring them back to me!”

“Yellow--” Sapnap spluttered. “*Flowers*? Why do you need those for the revolution?”

“To deal emotional damage to my enemies!” Dream beamed and offered no further explanation.

George grimaced. “That’s. . . our best lead so far. Maybe if we do it, he’ll go back to normal?”

“This is some magical bullshit,” Punz muttered. “So we have to collect a hundred yellow flowers to *possibly* fix him?”

“Yes,” George deadpanned. “Wait, are there even any flowers on this server? Because I think we might have. . . killed all of them. Or the ones nearby, at least.”

Sapnap felt the inexplicable urge to set something on fire.

---

Tubbo knocked on the door. “Wilbur, are you in there? I’ve got dinner.”

No answer. Tubbo frowned. “I’m coming in!”

He pushed the door open and was promptly met with the sight of a sobbing Wilbur, slumped in a chair with his head in his hands. “Please,” he begged. “Please, just give Tommy back.”

Tommy, who had somehow freed himself from the confines of the boat he’d been moved into and was now attempting to walk through Wilbur’s desk, did an about-face and smiled at him with cold, dead eyes. “L’Manberg is so beautiful at this time of day!”

Wilbur began to sob louder. Tubbo quietly backed out of the room and shut the door.

If Wilbur wanted food, he could get it himself. Tubbo didn’t want to be involved with whatever the fuck was happening.

**149.** *toddler tales, pt. 9* ( [see previous parts of this loop here](#) )

“Are you *sure* they’ll be okay?”

Puffy sighed. “Sam. You’ve already asked this twice. The answer’s not going to change.”

“But we’re leaving them all alone in the house--”

“The door’s locked, they’re tucked in bed and not waking up for at least another five hours. That’s long enough for us to get to Philza’s house and back.”

“But what if they wake up and find out we’re gone and go looking for us--?”

Puffy stopped in her tracks, put her hands on Sam’s shoulders (with some difficulty-- the height difference was honestly ridiculous) and looked him in the eyes. “Sam. They’re safe. They’re going to be fine.”

The creeper hybrid looked away, rubbing his forehead. “I . . . right. Sorry, just. . .” he gestured in the direction they’d come from. “They’re. . . they can’t defend themselves right now.”

“I know. But if we want to help them, we need to do this. So *calm down*.”

Sam’s shoulders slumped, but he nodded to show his understanding. Puffy released him with a pat on the arm. Together, they made their way into L’Manberg, weapons stowed away but nerves on high alert. Their wariness seemed unwarranted, however, because they didn’t run into a single person.

Puffy paused at the bottom of the steps, glancing back at Sam. "You ready?" she asked. Sam nodded, and together, they ascended the stairs to the entrance. The door was ajar, the edge splintered as though it had been kicked in. Puffy narrowed her eyes, then drew her sword and nudged the door open.

A man was crouched over a chest, picking through it and muttering something under his breath. Sam blinked at his back.

"Quackity?"

Quackity spun around, an easy smile sliding over his surprise. "Sam. Puffy! What brings you here?"

". . . We ran into a mini Tommy earlier, and we figured Philza would know something about it." Puffy's gaze swept over the ransacked chests, overturned furniture, and shattered glass. "What happened here?"

"Philza didn't agree with house arrest. If you're looking for him, he's long gone by now."

Sam and Puffy exchanged glances. "Any chance you know where he went?"

"You're in luck." Quackity grinned, holding something up. It appeared to be a compass, cracked in places and obviously assembled from damaged parts. The needle pointed insistently in one direction. "I have a compass."

---

"Ah, shit."

Technoblade looked up from where he'd been pulling his armor off. "Phil?"

Philza turned from where he was standing by the window. "Techno, there are people outside."

"*Heh?!!*" Technoblade hurried over to the window and squinted into the snow, paling when he saw three figures in the distance. "How did they find this place? I destroyed the compass, there shouldn't be anything leadin' back here!" He shook himself. "Doesn't matter. Phil, you up for a fight?"

"When am I ever not?" Phil laughed. Technoblade rolled his eyes and strapped his chestplate back into place, then began digging through a chest of potions. Philza, meanwhile, threw his armor on with all the ease of a seasoned veteran and drew a sword. As one, they turned towards the entrance-- only to stop when a knock resounded through the door.

"Oh, that's not good," Philza muttered.

"Technoblade?" The voice didn't belong to any of the Butcher Army. Rather, it sounded like. . . Captain Puffy. From what Technoblade could recall, he hadn't done anything to gain her



ire - in fact, he was pretty sure they were on neutral terms, leaning towards friendliness. Why was she here? “Technoblade, are you home? We just want to talk.”

“Who’s with you?” Technoblade called back.

“Uh. Sam and--” Puffy was cut off when the doors shuddered. Technoblade grabbed Philza and dragged him back just as they flew open. On the other side, a familiar silhouette lowered its foot.

Technoblade adjusted his grip on his sword. “Quackity.”

“Technoblade. Philza,” Quackity greeted, stalking into the house. Puffy and Sam trailed after him. The creeper hybrid even had the decency to wrench the doors back into place - not that Technoblade was in any mood to appreciate it.

“Get out,” he ordered. “We’re not fightin’ in my house.”

“That’s not for you to decide.” Quackity smiled, the scar tissue cutting through his lip distorting. “Two against three. Odds aren’t in your favor.”

“You’re forgettin’ who you’re talkin’ to, Quackity.”

“Wait wait wait wait wait!” Sam stepped between Quackity and Technoblade, his trident disappearing in a flash of light. “We’re not here for a fight--”

“Shouldn’t have brought Quackity, then.”

“--we just want some answers.” Sam glanced back at the other two, an edge of desperation in his voice. “We’ll even put away our weapons! See?”

Puffy, who hadn’t been holding a weapon in the first place, raised her hands and glanced at Quackity. Quackity reluctantly lowered his axe, taking a step back as it disappeared into his inventory.

Technoblade’s eyes narrowed. At this distance, it was child’s play to summon a weapon mid-lunge and take someone’s head off. “We’re not puttin’ our weapons away.”

Quackity bristled, but Puffy intervened before he could speak. “That’s fine! That’s fine. We just want some answers.”

“What answers?”

“. . . How did Tommy and Dream turn into children?”

Technoblade felt Philza shift. He deliberately kept his gaze fixed on Puffy. “What makes you think I know?”

“Tommy told us about his kidnapper,” was the dry answer. Technoblade lowered his sword so he could raise one hand to his face.

“Of *course*,” he muttered, then leveled a glower at them. “Look, if I tell you, will you leave me alone?”

“Yes--”

“Wasn’t askin’ you.” Technoblade pointed a clawed finger at Quackity. “He’s gotta agree before I tell you.”

Quackity bared his teeth, but he didn’t draw a weapon, which was a good sign in Technoblade’s opinion. “*Fine*,” he ground out. “Tell us what happened to Tommy and we’ll get out of your fucking hair.”

Technoblade stared at him for a long moment. Quackity raised his chin and met his gaze with a scowl. There was a good chance the duck hybrid was lying, but on the off chance that he wasn’t. . .

Technoblade really wasn’t in the mood for a fight today.

“Listen, I wasn’t there when it happened. I was out huntin’, came back and found two toddlers in my house. Workin’ theory is that Tommy messed up a potion, threw it at Dream, and got both of them turned into kids.”

“Oh,” Sam breathed, like he’d just received Enlightenment. “The *milk*.”

Before Technoblade could ask what *that* meant, Quackity drew his axe. Technoblade and Philza raised their own weapons in retaliation, while Puffy and Sam backed up. “Woah woah woah *wait*,” Puffy protested, raising her hands. “Quackity, what are you doing?!”

Quackity ignored them, his lips drawing back into a sneer. “Okay, fuck this. Technoblade. This ends *today*.”

Technoblade had expected Quackity to go back on the deal, but he’d really hoped to avoid a fight. Oh well. “You couldn’t beat me last time. What makes you think you can beat me now?”

Quackity opened his mouth to reply, only to be interrupted by something slamming against the door. “YEET!” a muffled voice screamed outside. A moment later, the doors of the house came crashing down. Dream stormed in, decked out in full netherite and wielding an axe and shield.

Technoblade blinked, a protest against property damage dying on his lips. “You grew up,” he said instead.

“I drank milk,” Dream answered. Which made no sense to Technoblade, but sure. As long as he didn’t have to deal with a toddler again.

“Dream!” Sam cried. “You-- where’s Tommy?”

Cold silence descended upon the room as the fighters realized that Tommy was nowhere in sight. Abruptly, Quackity raised his axe.

“Where is he?” he snarled, advancing on Dream. “What the *fuck* did you do to him?”

“Woah woah woah!” Dream backpedaled, raising his shield to ward off a blow. “Tommy’s fine! We separated before I changed back--”

“Like *hell* I’ll believe that--”

The window shattered. Quackity whipped his shield up, but it was useless against the mist that engulfed the room. Shouts of alarm were swallowed up in the colorful smoke. When it dissipated, Tommy poked his head through the broken window, grinning.

The grin slid off his face when he saw the six toddlers scattered around the room, all blinking dazedly down at the giant pieces of armor that surrounded them. Slowly, toddler Dream turned to Tommy.

“Oops?” Tommy whispered. “I . . . I thought it was Paralysis. . .”

“I am going to kill you,” Dream informed him.

“Fair.”

**150.**

### ***TW: Implied Abuse***

Dream sighed as he came to a stop beside Schlatt’s office. He’d been more active in Manberg this loop, taking the role of a pseudo-assistant to see if he could save the nation through bureaucracy. To be honest, it wasn’t looking great so far, and he was sorely tempted to say “fuck it” and prank Schlatt into behaving.

He had just raised his hand to knock when a loud thud reverberated through the door. Dream reared back, alarmed. “Schlatt?” he called. When there was no answer, he continued. “I have, uh, some forms for review.”

A voice sounded from the other side, muffled. Dream couldn’t figure out what they were saying, but their words were laced with panic. “I’m coming in,” he warned, and shoved the door open.

Schlatt was standing in front of him, face carved in an angry snarl. His hair was in a disarray, his tie was askew, and he had a bottle clutched in one hand. Dream took a subtle sniff and grimaced at the stench of alcohol.

“Leave it and get out,” Schlatt snarled.

Dream raised an eyebrow (not that Schlatt could see it). “Alright, alright,” he muttered, sidling over to the desk and depositing the stack of papers. As he did so, he conducted a surreptitious scan of the room. There didn’t appear to be anyone else here - but the other voice most *definitely* had not been Schlatt’s. “I need these by the end of--”

*“Get out.”*

Dream clamped down on a flash of irritation. Bureaucracy was obviously nowhere near as effective as ghost tactics. He made a mental note to drop the project and glitter bomb Manberg if Schlatt continued to drink, then offered his ‘boss’ an affable nod and ambled towards the door. “I’ll be back later,” he warned.

He had almost reached the door when a sound caught his ear. He paused mid-step, head cocking as he listened. There it was again - a hiccuping, whistling breath beneath Schlatt’s wheezing ones. The sound of someone trying to hyperventilate quietly. It was coming from in front of him, but not from the hallway.

Dream reached out and swung the open door away from the wall, revealing the figure hidden behind it. Quackity stared back at him, eyes wide. His shaking hands were clamped over his mouth, stifling his rapid breaths. His wings - gold, rarely seen post-Pogtopia - pressed against the wall behind him, almost like he was trying to hide them. One appeared to be damaged, feathers bent and knocked askew as though someone had attempted to grab them.

A heavy hand settled on his shoulder. Slowly, Dream turned, meeting Schlatt’s gaze. The ram hybrid was definitely drunk - enough that he could no longer control his temper, but not enough to attack Dream. After all, Dream was a valuable ally - even if he was currently playing secretary. Quackity, however, was his subordinate and thus fair game.

Well. This certainly complicated things.

Dream postponed his internal screaming fit, reached up, and lifted Schlatt’s hand off his shoulder. “Hey,” he said to Quackity. “I’ve been looking for you - I have some questions about filing. Do you have a minute?”

Quackity’s gaze darted past him, to Schlatt, then back to him. “I-- I--”

“Great!” Dream took a step back, shouldering Schlatt away and placing himself between the two men. “Let’s go to your office. We can talk there.”

“Now wait a minute,” Schlatt said behind him, and Quackity flinched. Dream let out a friendly chuckle and took another step back, physically barring Schlatt from reaching forward.

“Sorry, mister president. I’ve been waiting a long time to ask, and I don’t want to spend another week chasing him down.” He jerked his head towards the door. Thankfully, Quackity caught the cue and hurried out of the room. Dream followed, shoulder-checking Schlatt on his way out.

“This isn’t over!” The president hollered at their backs. Dream slammed the door shut and wasted no time in leading Quackity down the hallway. Every instinct screamed at him for showing Quackity his back, but Quackity was more likely to panic if anyone was close to his wings at the moment.

“Where do you want to go?” he asked instead. He heard Quackity’s footsteps stutter.

“ . . . Didn’t you say--?”

“I was lying. To get Schlatt off my back, you know?”

“Ah.” There was a rustling noise, like feathers against cloth. “ . . . Well, thanks for the save, b-but I’m good now.”

Dream was almost impressed with how quickly Quackity had pulled on a façade of calm. He slowed, peering over his shoulder. Quackity’s hands were balled into fists, and his wings were puffed up. Defensive. Quackity didn’t trust him, but. . . “Are you sure?”

Quackity nodded, a single, sharp jerk of his head. Dream knew when to pick his battles, so he shrugged and came to a stop outside Quackity’s office.

“Okay then,” he hummed, ignoring the way Quackity’s feathers bristled. “I’ll be in my office if you need anything.”

Quackity grunted in acknowledgement and shut the door. Dream stared at it for a moment, then turned on his heel and headed down the hall.

The moment he was safely in his own office, Dream sank down into his chair and propped his elbows on the desk. He stared down at the paperwork without really seeing it, contemplating the events of the past five minutes.

He’d known that Schlatt hadn’t treated Quackity well, but there was a difference between *knowing* something and actually *seeing* it. It was. . . jarring, realizing how different this Quackity was from his future self. What happened, to twist the weak-willed vice president into a monster? What had *hurt* Quackity?

He sighed, pushing himself up from the desk and stretching out a crick in his back. He had to change his plans - letting Schlatt hurt his subordinates was a no-go, even if it was just for a loop.

Might as well go check if Tommy wanted to join in on the fun.

## Chapter End Notes

[FANART FOR THE REMIX LOOP](#) by Hexx!! Aaa they got all the little details (cracks in the mask + dream’s cape & braid just-- I LOVE IT)  
Also new inspired fic (hermitcraft timeloop)! Go check that out (^^)

### **Loop Notes**

**146.** They kept a scoreboard of who got punted most often in front of the gate. Wilbur came in first, with Dream in close second.

**147.** It was bound to happen eventually.

**148.** Luckily, they stumbled across a flower field. Dream was ‘fixed’ after his friends

completed the quest, much to their relief. On an unrelated note, Tommy woke up to find his bedroom filled with yellow flowers the next morning.

**149.** And thus concludes toddler tales! Next up: babysitting arc! (/j)

# Chapter 31

## Chapter Notes

Y'all. I apologize in advance for this chapter. I have been exhausted bcs of a) writing nonstop at a camp for five hours a day, b) college essays and c) going from 1.5 months of basic total isolation to 2 weeks of nothing BUT social interaction with strangers like why did we make socialization so complicated?? and then when I was editing pain week started and I just want to lie down and sleep but my brain demands this be posted so. enjoy. or don't. 'tis your personal choice

### Spotlighted Comments

**Crazyapplekiss:** God, dream left the child alone for 2 seconds and he destroyed the world.

**Crystalcatgamer:** "We're all going to die." Ranboo mourns, watching Tubbo do a check up on the glitter nuke launcher with zero of the care one should have when working with (any type of) nuke. The sun is shining in Big Town, and it might be the last morning Ranboo's ever going to see.

Tommy cracks open a sparkling water next to him, reclining on a chair and flipping his sunglasses down. "Yeah, probably."

**ch1kow:** tommy's the kind of guy to see an untested potion and ask "is anyone doing to drink that?" and not wait for an answer.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

### 151. *(credit to Lyrmony)*

Dream opened the door of his house and paused.

His Tommy-senses were tingling. The other looper had been through here at some point, which inevitably meant. . .

He surveyed the foyer. Yup, there it was - a tripwire, hair-thin and barely visible in the light. Tommy should have known better than to try such primitive pranks by now, but maybe he hadn't felt like being too high-effort this loop. Or *maybe*-- nope, there weren't any pressure plates or traces of redstone beyond the wire. It was just a tripwire. A bit disappointing, but at least Dream could avoid it.

With a sigh, Dream stepped over the tripwire-- only to freeze when he felt something brush against his hair. A second wire, even thinner than the first, suspended at *just* the right height to tug at his hair when he walked past it.

Dream had one second to feel mildly impressed before a bucket of glue and feathers was upended upon his head.

---

“Technoblade?”

“Hey, Phil,” Technoblade answered. He did not turn away from the bonfire in front of him. “What brings you here?”

Philza eyed the torch in his hands. “Are you. . . burning down your house?”

“The animals are safe,” Technoblade assured him. “I already moved my valuables to my backup house.”

“Okay, but why. . .?”

Technoblade fixed him with an inscrutable stare. “Tommy did some breakin’ and enterin’ while we were gone. I’m decontaminatin’.”

“By burning the house? Seems a bit. . . excessive, mate.”

“He plastered the walls with bacon-themed wallpaper. Strippin’ it will be a waste of time if he can just break in again, so I’m burnin’ the abomination down and movin’ on.”

“. . . Ah.” Philza took a moment to digest that, then blinked. “Wait, bacon-themed wallpaper? Where did he even get that?”

“Looked handpainted to me. Whoever drew it was pretty good.” Technoblade relit a piece of wood that had died down to a smolder. “*Shame* it’s gettin’ burnt.”

His tone made it very clear that he didn’t think it was a shame at all.

---

“You too?” was the first thing out of Tubbo’s mouth when he opened the door. A rather *glittery* Quackity stared back, a bristling (and bright pink) Fundy at his side.

“Too?” the duck hybrid demanded, only to do a truly impressive triple take when he caught sight of Tubbo’s living room. “What the fuck? How--”

“Dunno.” Tubbo shouldered his way past the two of them and shut the door, concealing the thick layer of googly eyes covering his walls. “I *do* know, however, that I need a new house. Whoever did this used some sort of superglue - I can’t hack away the eyes without hacking away the wall, and I’m not sleeping with that monstrosity staring at me.”

“Shit, it’s in your bedroom too?”



"And my kitchen. And my basement." At Quackity's wince, Tubbo nodded. "Yep."

---

"Hm," said Ranboo. "This. Might be a problem."

The chickens crowding his halls seemed to collectively stop and shoot him a look of 'no shit'. Or maybe Ranboo was hallucinating now. This certainly felt close enough to a fever dream.

With a sigh, he began the tedious process of slaughtering his way through the poultry. Unfortunately, he realized halfway through that his home had been littered with pressure plates that, when sprung, would release *more* chickens. Furthermore, the damage the birds had caused to his house's structural integrity was pretty extensive. It would be easier to move.

With a put-upon sigh, Ranboo vaulted out the window, kicked off his guano-stained shoes, and pulled out his memory book. If he woke up in an unfamiliar place tomorrow, at least he'd know why.

---

"How do you keep findin' my cabins?!"

"I'm just that good," Tommy sang, tossing a glitter bomb at Technoblade's head. Technoblade, being the seasoned warrior he was, easily dodged. His couch was unfortunately not as mobile, and thus suffered great damage.

"It's impossible!" the piglin hybrid insisted. "I made like-- ten different places-- *how* are you doin' this?!"

"I'm a mind reader, Techno." The statement was spoken with two parts empty boasting and one part complete bullshittery, just the right combination to confuse any attempt to discern whether it was truthful or not. "I *know* where your houses are, because *you* know where your houses are."

"*Heh--?!*" was the last thing Technoblade got out before the other glitter bombs planted around his house went off.

Tommy made his escape before he could get mauled.

---

“I hate this,” were the first words out of Fundy’s mouth.

“You and me both,” Quackity groaned into the wooden table of the cabinet meeting room. “Seriously, who the fuck does stuff like this?” he peeled his face off the table long enough to squint at Fundy. “Nice color, by the way. Red looks good on you.”

“Thank you,” Fundy said automatically, reaching up to pat his burgundy-dyed hair. Then he shook himself. “Anyways-- we need to stop this. My entire house is *bright green!*”

“At least you can still live in your house,” Quackity grumbled, only to wince when Fundy growled. “. . . That bad, huh?”

“*New windows* show up when I’m sleeping. My west wall is *completely gone.*”

“. . . Ah.” To avoid Fundy’s death glare, Quackity turned to Tubbo. “Tubbo, what happened to your new house?”

Tubbo had a thousand-yard stare directed at a point over Quackity’s shoulder. When the duck hybrid nudged him, he shuddered. “The spiders. . .”

Quackity cleared his throat. “Okay, uh. . . sounds like we’ve got dyeing, glitter bombs, paint, general grieving, and. . . something with spiders. Does that sound like anyone we know?”

“I mean, anyone could do that,” Fundy pointed out. “Who’s been untouched? I know Niki’s house is fine. . .”

“Because nobody with a brain cell is going to mess with Niki. What about Tommy?”

“Tommy doesn’t *have* a house. But it *is* true that we haven’t seen him in a while. . .”

“*And* he did have that thing with glitter back when we first started, right?”

“Guilty as charged!”

The three cabinet members screamed in unison as Tommy dropped from the ceiling, executed a perfect flip, and landed on the table feet-first. “Tommy!” Quackity wheezed, scrabbling at his chest. “What the fuck, man!”

“Sorry,” Tommy sang, not sounding sorry at all. “But yes, you’re right! I’m the one rigging all the houses!”

“Why?” Fundy asked with the inflection of someone whose soul had long since exited their mortal frame. “Why are you doing this?”

“You know how a lot of conflicts stem from grieving?” Tommy shrugged. “Everything would be so much more peaceful if there weren’t any houses to grief--”

“You’re the one that does the most grieving!”

--so I thought everyone should be homeless. Except for Niki. Her bakery can stay.”

“You realize,” Quackity said slowly, “That you’re the Vice President. You could’ve just put rules in place to prevent grieving.”

“But what’s the fun in that?”

Fundy inhaled, pressed his face into his hands, and screamed.

---

“This place is *underground*! Phil blindfolded me when he took me here! There’s no way--”

“You’re not the only mind I can read, Techno.”

Tommy was treated to the rare sight of Technoblade burying his face in his hands and screaming. Just a single, monotonous “aaaaaaaaaaaa” that paused only when Technoblade had to take a breath.

He filmed the entire thing, of course. Dream would want to see it.

---

Dream stepped into the community house, smug satisfaction oozing off his every movement. Technoblade, who had previously been moping in an armchair beside one of the windows, turned at his entrance and raised an eyebrow.

“Dream,” he greeted, then looked him up and down. “You look. . . well.”

Which is to say that he looked completely normal - as opposed to Technoblade, who appeared to have gone through hell and back. If hell had a lot of craft supplies. And glitter. And was run by a demented toddler.

“Hey Techno,” Dream chirped. His grin widened at the narrow-eyed stare he received. “Just dropped by to say something.”

“And that something would be. . .?”

“Now who’s homeless?”

Technoblade opened his mouth. Closed it. Blinked a few times, then opened it again. “. . . Did you set this up with Tommy just so you could say that?”

“No comment.”

Technoblade took a deep, deep breath, then calmly rose from his seat, walked over to one of the beanbags, and faceplanted in it. “That’s it,” he said into the fabric. “I’m done. No, Chat, no blood for the blood god. They beat me fair and square.”

Dream dropped down into a beanbag beside him, shoving his mask aside to reveal a wide grin. “Honestly, I’m surprised you took so long to crack. I knew you were stubborn, but. . .”

Technoblade rolled over and fixed him with a dull stare. “Congratulations,” he deadpanned. “You finally beat me. What was our score again? Dream, one, Technoblade, three?” He counted off his fingers. “There was that duel, then the incident with the chihuahua--”

“We agreed to never speak of that again.”

Technoblade looked him in the eye. “--the *incident with the chihuahua*, ” he repeated, “and the chess game.”

Dream rolled his eyes. “Yeah, yeah. How does it feel to lose for once?”

“Terrible. Horrible. I will never recover from this loss. To compensate, I vow burnin’ hatred upon you and your ancestors until the third generation.”

“Love you too, Techno.”

## 152. (*credit to Smallest*)

“Wait wait wait, hold up.” Dream held up a hand. “I said no minors. Tubbo, go back to L’Manberg.”

“I-- wha?”

“No minors,” Dream repeated. “It was one of the rules I set out on the server. No minors get involved in wars.”

“You can’t just do that,” Wilbur protested. “We’ll be down a fighter!”

“It’s the rule.”

“And if we don’t obey?”

Dream narrowed his eyes. “Look, I’ve been pretty okay with playing along with the whole L’Manberg shebang up until now, but if you try to send Tubbo in I’ll be forced to take drastic measures. The kids stay out. Don’t involve them.”

“I can fight!” Tubbo snapped. “I’ve been learning since I was six--”

“I know you can fight. Skill isn’t the problem here, it’s L’Manberg using *child soldiers*.”

Wilbur opened his mouth. Closed it, considered the statement for a moment, then turned a shade paler. “. . . Yeah, that’s. . . pretty bad, isn’t it.”

"*Pretty bad,*" Dream mocked in a high-pitched voice that sounded closer to a chipmunk than Wilbur. "*Ah yes, making children fight wars is just a little teensy tiny bit bad. A normal childhood? What's that?*"

“Wait, why aren’t you kicking Tommy out?” Sapnap asked. “He’s a kid too, right?”

Dream coughed, dropping back to his normal voice. “No? He’s older than all of you.”

“What?”

“What?”

“No, what did you just say?”

“Tommy’s older than all of you?”

“What do you mean he’s older than us?!”

“. . . Exactly what I said?”

Sapnap looked at Tommy, who still very much appeared to be a teenager. Tommy shrugged. “Don’t ask me how old I am. I lost count around the two hundreds.”

Wilbur’s head snapped around so quickly, something audibly *cracked*. “*What?* Tommy, this isn’t-- this isn’t the time for jokes--”

“I’m not joking! I’m over two hundred.” Tommy frowned at the stares he received. “I thought you knew?”

Wilbur floundered, apparently trying to decide between calling out the discrepancy in Tommy’s claim and L’Manberg’s dire need for fighters. The decision was taken out of his hands by George, who stepped forward. “Dream, you can’t be serious.”

“I am?” Dream affected a look of perfect confusion. “Tommy’s almost as old as Philza Minecraft. We’ve been over this.”

“*We haven’t!*”

“Oh. Well. Now we have.” Ignoring the truly *flabbergasted* noise George made, he turned to the others. “So. Tubbo, get out. The rest of you, get up here and fight. Or run away like cowards, that works too.”

“You can’t just--” Sapnap started, only to be cut off when Tommy launched himself at Dream with a war cry. The rest of the onlookers (sans Tubbo) were soon dragged into the fray, albeit unwillingly, and by the time the dust had settled both Tommy and Dream were ignoring any questions in favor of hashing out a deal for L’Manberg’s independence - much to the disappointment, annoyance, and overall confusion of everyone else.

Needless to say, this L'Manberg's Independence Day was significantly more chaotic than the one in loop zero.

**153.** (*credit to curry\_powder*)

“You fucked up for the last time, Dream.”

“Tommy,” Dream began, lacing every bit of condescension he could gather into the word. “You said I’m not going to kill you, and you’re not going to kill me.”

Tommy glowered. “And why would I kill you-- “

He was interrupted by a loud squeaking noise, akin to a duck on helium. When he tried to speak, Dream squished the Taboo squeaker again. Tommy pointed at him.

“Okay, first of all the buzzer is completely unnecessary--”

“Oh, it’s *very* necessary--”

“--I *noticed* the mistake, you bastard-- and second of all, it was one word!”

“Still a mistake either way! Add it to the board.”

“I hate you,” Tommy decided, yanking a whiteboard from his inventory and scoring another tally under his own column. “I hate you so much.”

“Sorry, I couldn’t hear you over the sound of you forgetting your lines.”

“Oh, you f--” Tommy’s expletives were cut off when Dream squeezed the Taboo squeaker again.

“Um,” someone said behind them. Both loopers turned to see their audience, which consisted of a good part of the server - decked out in full netherite and all staring at them in various stages of bewilderment.

“Well shit,” said Tommy. He turned to Dream. “Back to normal?”

“Back to normal.”

“Right.” Tommy stowed the whiteboard away and cleared his throat. “Why would I *not* kill you?”

“Axe,” Dream reminded him. “And no, that doesn’t count as a line mistake.”

“Cheater,” Tommy complained. He pulled out the Axe of Peace. “There. Okay, for real this time--”

“From the top?”

“ . . . Sure, why the fuck not.”

Both loopers proceeded to repeat the scene, ignoring their baffled audience.

**154.** *remix, pt. 10* ( [see previous parts of this loop here](#) )

It had been nearly two hours since Quackity had told them everything, and Sapnap was still in denial.

Last he'd checked, Tommy was a good kid. Traumatized, angry, and a little misguided, but at the end of the day he was just a teenager who'd been through too much shit.

Hearing that he'd-- *fuck*, that he'd threatened George and Sapnap to get Dream to cooperate, that he'd messed with Dream's head in Exile, that he'd killed-- no, *executed* him, because there was a difference--

He'd known that this server took good things and twisted them beyond recognition. But some part of him had never thought that it would happen to *Tommy*. Tommy, the sunshine child who'd remained determined in the face of Dream's rage, who'd sacrificed *so much* for the ones he loved. Oh, Sapnap was *furious* that Tommy had burned down George's house - because no matter whatever the fuck had gone down at that sham of a trial, Sapnap believed George - and *doubly* as furious that Tommy had pinned it on Dream, but at the end of the day, he knew that Tommy was just a kid who took pranks a little too far. Dream had played along, even, and Sapnap had laughed with George because they'd thought this was another bit, another moment when Dream humored Tommy's games.

Except it hadn't been a game. And this? This went against everything he knew about Tommy. Tommy was supposed to be a constant, a teenager that would never grow into shoes too big for him. Except Tommy *had* grown into those shoes, then outgrown them, and was now teetering on the edge of the same chasm Wilbur had fallen into.

Looking back now, that belief had been stupid. Tommy had been involved in almost every major conflict, had suffered at the hands of nearly everyone on the server. He was bound to snap at some point. Sapnap just hadn't thought that he'd break like *this*.

A weight settled against his side. “You okay?” Karl asked, his voice laced with concern. Sapnap let out a dry laugh.

“No,” he admitted. “It's just. . . *Tommy*. He wouldn't-- he wouldn't *do that*, would he?”

“I don't know,” Karl admitted. “But Quackity wouldn't lie to us. You saw how torn up he was.”

Grim silence settled over them. Sapnap slumped, rubbing a hand over his eyes. “Shit,” he muttered. “*Shit*. He was close to Tommy, right? I shouldn't--”

“None of that.” Karl pulled his hand away from his face and rubbed circles across the back of his palm. “Just because you weren’t as close doesn’t mean you’re not allowed to feel upset. He *threatened* you and George to get at Dream, Sap. That’s not okay.”

“I *know* that, ” Sapnap whispered. “But-- *Tommy*. And *Dream*-- fuck, *Dream*, we thought it was a bit, we thought he was just going along with Tommy. We haven't been too close recently but he's still-- he lost a *life*, Karl. I need to-- I don't know where he is. Tommy killed him, Karl-- *Tommy*. How could he do that? *Why* would he do that? It's Tommy, he's not supposed to be-- to be. . .”

Karl was silent for a moment. “He's not,” he agreed at last, then sighed heavily and tugged at Sapnap’s shoulders. “C’mere. You need a hug.”

“This isn’t a hug,” Sapnap muttered, but he let himself flop across Karl’s legs. Karl hummed, amused, and began running his fingers through his hair. They sat in quiet peace for a while, simply enjoying each others’ presence.

At last, Sapnap reluctantly peeled himself away and sat up. “. . . Where’s Q? I know he said he wanted to be alone, but it’s been over two hours.”

“Still in his room.” Karl brushed his hair out of his face so he could squint at Sapnap. “You want to check on him?”

In answer, Sapnap began pushing himself off the couch. Karl rushed to help him, only to nearly crack his head open on the coffee table when his legs refused to cooperate. Sapnap winced. “Your legs fell asleep?”

“Yup,” Karl confirmed. He held out his hands in a silent plea for assistance, which Sapnap gladly gave. Together, they hobbled towards the stairs. Karl giggled as they nearly tripped on the first step, and Sapnap found himself smiling.

Still, even as his heart grew lighter, he couldn’t help but remember the bright grin Tommy had sent him on the first day on the server. His boisterous laughter, and his childish delight in juvenile pranks. How could Tommy - *Tommy*, the endearing nuisance that grew on people like a fungus - use him as a bargaining chip? And then there was Dream, the friend that had grown into a stranger - the friend Sapnap had drifted away from, even as he grew closer to George - if anything, *Dream* was the one who'd been set to become the villain of Tommy's story.

A tiny part of his mind murmured that things weren’t so black and white anymore.

---

Technoblade nearly tore the door off its hinges in his haste to get inside. His heart pounded in his ears, almost loud enough to drown out the clamor in his head. Philza was a step behind him, wings fluffed up with agitation. “Dream?” he called. “Dream, are you here?”



A thump reverberated through the ceiling. Muffled cursing floated down from above, and Technoblade felt a part of him relax. He wasted no time throwing himself up the ladder, scrambling through the door and into the guest bedroom.

“Dream?”

Dream was sprawled on the ground, presumably due to a fall. He’d managed to prop himself up against the bed and was in the process of rearranging himself into a seated position. At the sound of Technoblade’s voice, he froze, then slowly looked up like a child that had been caught with their hand in the cookie jar.

Technoblade heard Philza hiss behind him, feathers rustling against cloth as he recoiled. New scars spiderwebbed across Dream’s face like cracks in an eggshell, ugly, jagged things radiating from a point in his hairline. They continued down his neck and into the collar of his shirt, and Technoblade would bet a good portion of his wealth that the rest of his body was in a similar state.

He looked like a piece of broken pottery, shattered and haphazardly glued back together.

“Hi?” Dream said, and Technoblade startled when he realized that the silence had dragged on for a moment too long. Giving himself a mental shake, he swept forward, already drawing a potion of Regeneration from his inventory.

“Does it hurt?” he asked. Dream hesitated, flexing his hands, then shook his head and waved the potion away.

“I’m fine,” he said. Technoblade let out a displeased rumble, but he set the potion aside in favor of helping Dream back into the bed. “No, really-- the respawn fixed most of it.”

“Not all of it,” Technoblade muttered. Once Dream was properly settled against the headboard, he snatched the potion back up and shook it in front of Dream’s face. “Drink.”

Dream rolled his eyes, but took the potion and downed it like a shot. Then he shuddered at the sudden magic overload. Technoblade snatched the empty bottle from his hands before he could drop it.

“Slowly,” he chided. Dream made a face at him, like the mature adult he was. Technoblade snorted and turned away to stow the bottle in a chest.

“So,” Philza said. “Tommy.”

“Tommy,” Technoblade grunted. He dragged a chair from the corner of the room and settled into it. “He’s a problem. Big one. Better fighter than I remember - didn’t even notice he was baitin’ me.”

“Invented new potions too,” Philza muttered. “Never seen paralysis before.” Which, given Philza’s lifespan, was quite a concern.

Dream hummed, twisting his fingers in his blankets. “He’s dangerous, but I don’t think killing him will solve anything? Like,” he added hastily when Technoblade’s eyes narrowed,

"It'll just get Tubbo and the rest of L'Manberg mad at us. Tommy's the vice president, you know?"

". . . Then what if we destroy L'Manberg?" Philza asked, and Technoblade straightened because he *knew* that tone, *knew* the barely-hidden rage straining beneath it. This was personal. This was something beyond Dream, and Technoblade *understood* because Philza *hated* L'Manberg for taking Wilbur away from him, for trying to take Technoblade as well.

"That. . ." Dream chewed on the inside of his cheek. "Won't it just end with all of L'Manberg fighting us?"

"Look Dream, we're gonna be fighting L'Manberg either way. If you're worried about losing, I think the three of us can take them. Not to brag or anythin', but we're kinda the best fighters on the server."

"Not right now, I'm not."

Technoblade paused, studied Dream for a moment, and was forced to concede that that was a fair point. "Well then, Phil and I are the best fighters on the server. We can take 'em, and I've been stockpilin' some--"

"Techno," Philza interrupted, and there was such *panic* in his voice that Technoblade threw himself to his feet, spinning to face him. But Philza wasn't looking at him-- he was looking at the window. Technoblade followed his gaze, and his heart dropped into his stomach.

The area around the house was *ringed* with TNT, the walls similarly plastered with explosives. At the center of it all stood Tommy, Dream's mask set firmly over his face. He stared directly at Technoblade even as he struck a flint and steel over the first fuse, then waved mockingly before vanishing in a burst of ender particles. Technoblade snarled, grabbing Philza and Dream and *lunging* for the window, but it was too late.

The TNT detonated, and the world went up in flames.

## 155.

Tommy stumbled as powdery snow crunched beneath his next step. Shaking off the usual start-of-loop disorientation, he surveyed the area. He appeared to be in a spruce forest, walking steadily in one direction. The sky had been smothered in a thick layer of clouds, leaving a chill in the air that stung at his exposed fingertips. Directly in front of him, another figure marched along, her pink hair tied back in a ponytail.

Tommy narrowed his eyes at Niki's back. He'd begun to suspect that she hated him at this point in the timeline, but because she hadn't ever said or showed it outright, he couldn't be sure. From what he could remember, this was the day when she'd offered to help him gather spruce - and the day he'd gotten radiation poisoning. Better to avoid the nuke crater, then, or at least grab a suit before he headed in.

In the meantime, he could test the waters. See if she really was mad at him. He hadn't interacted enough with her later in the timeline to get a concrete idea, so this was a golden opportunity.

"So, Niki," he began, noting how her shoulders hiked up. "Are you, uh. . . okay?"

Niki didn't turn around. "Fine," she snapped, speeding up. Tommy winced at her tone. He'd been pretty miffed by Sam Nook's demands that day, and he'd partially taken it out on her - amping his obnoxious act up a few levels and ignoring her discomfort. It was still pretty jarring, though, to end one loop on good terms with Niki only to be dropped into this one.

"You sure? You sound a little, uh. . ."

"I'm *fine*," Niki insisted, then took a deep breath. When she spoke again, her voice no longer strained on the edge of a shout. "Really, Tommy. It's just, uh, the cold."

"Oh. You want a jacket?"

"No, thank you."

They walked in silence for another minute. Tommy glanced at the copses of spruce they passed, but didn't attempt to chop any of them down. Something had begun gnawing at the back of his mind, a warning. A premonition. Tommy trusted his instincts, but he needed to see this through to the end.

When the quiet stretched on for a moment too long, Tommy scrambled for the first conversation topic that came to mind. "So. . . seen any women lately?" Not the greatest conversation topic for a conversation with Niki. Oops. "Uh, not that-- I mean, uh, besides you, Niki. You're a woman too, yes. But like--"

"Prime, just shut up," Niki growled under her breath, and Tommy stopped in his tracks. Niki stopped too, as though suddenly realizing she'd said something she shouldn't have.

"Niki. . .?"

Niki remained silent, fingers curling and uncurling like she was debating whether or not to wring his neck. At last she sighed, long and low, and turned to face him.

Tommy found himself recoiling at the sheer *hatred* burning in her eyes. Her previous smile was nowhere to be seen, replaced with a scowl sharp enough to cut.

"I said, *shut up*."

Tommy felt like the air had been knocked from his lungs. A distant part of his brain noted that at least he could confirm that she hated him now, but knowing it and *facing* it were two entirely different things. "N-Niki--"

Niki *exploded*. "I HATE YOU!" she screamed. "I *HATE YOU!* YOU'RE SO SELFISH AND STUPID AND YOU JUST DO WHATEVER YOU WANT TO AND YOU NEVER THINK ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES! YOU USE PEOPLE AND THROW THEM AWAY

WHEN YOU DON'T NEED THEM ANYMORE! YOU LEFT ME IN MANBERG, LEFT ME WITH SCHLATT WHEN YOU *KNEW* WHAT HE WOULD DO TO ME!"

"Niki--"

"SHUT UP!"

Tommy shut up.

"You started so many conflicts," she hissed, furious tears welling up in her eyes. "All because you couldn't let go of two *stupid fucking discs*. How many people suffered for your petty power struggles? How many people *died?!'*"

Her last words rang out against the snow-laden branches. She glared at him, panting with the exertion of her words, waiting for an answer-- but Tommy couldn't give her one. Couldn't speak. Couldn't move.

What could he say to that? He knew now that Niki hated him, but her *reasons*-- had she always felt like that? Had those been the thoughts cycling through her mind every time she looked at him, talked to him, smiled at him? Had this been how she felt since Manberg, when he and Wilbur had left her behind? Were her accusations fair? Had he abandoned her? Was he selfish? Was he responsible for the unending conflict on the server?

The heavy silence hanging between them was interrupted by the distant drone of a fast-approaching object. Tommy managed to recollect himself just enough to look up, spurred on by the realization that *they were too early*. Already he could see the shadow through the clouds, a black speck growing steadily larger.

"N-Niki," he croaked. "I'm--" *sorry*, he didn't say, because that didn't even *begin* to cover what he was feeling. He needed more time to reflect, to *think* about her words and his actions. So instead he focused on the more immediate issue. "We have to go. We have to go *now*."

Niki threw her head back and *laughed*, loud and angry and more than a little tear-crazed because she knew he knew he was avoiding the issue but Tommy couldn't *think* about it right now. So he staggered to her and shoved her in the direction of the path, ignoring how his heartbeat pounded in his ears. "Niki, run! RUN!"

Niki was openly sobbing now, her legs folding under her. Tommy tried to drag her away, but she was practically deadweight in his arms. He wouldn't be able to get out of blast range fast enough to get her out, but abandoning her was *not an option*.

"Niki, please," he begged. It was useless.

Overhead, the clouds parted. Sunlight glinted off the silver shell of the nuke as it descended from the sky. Tommy stared up at it, entranced, right before déjà vu rammed into him like a minecart. He'd been here before, staring up at a nuclear bomb. He'd been in this exact position at the final--

The world went white, and Tommy knew no more.

## Chapter End Notes

I'm really struggling with what I want to focus on in plot here. Thus: [survey](#). Based on results, I'll decide how far I want to take the three branches of plot. It's completely anonymous.

[fanart for the painting loop in Chap 26](#) by le\_tiny\_tato! It's beautiful askdjfksjdf  
[Hoodie monster Dream](#) by Ren, resident ot discord father figure  
Also new inspired fic!! Go check that out :D

### **Loop Notes**

**151.** Technoblade had many, many backup houses. Unfortunately, Tommy had many, many more pranking materials.

**152.** Sapnap, George, and Tubbo make a temporary truce to figure out how old Tommy is. This devolves into government conspiracy theories, and by the time Schlatt arrives on the server, over half the server has been dragged into the mess and are too preoccupied with 'uncovering the truth' to care about elections.

# Chapter 32

## Chapter Notes

IT'S A PLOT-FREE CHAPTER EVERYONE REJOICE

About half of this chapter was written after midnight (I promise I'm getting enough sleep), and somehow I feel like that improved the quality. Hope you enjoy :D

### Spotlighted Comments

**Thinkingisoverrated:** The boy got nuked. Respectfully, L.

**hsi\_wg:** but it was worth learning about *the incident with the chihuahua*. now we have even more blackmail material

**Clearly\_Crystal\_Clear:** And so, the mystery of Tommy's age brought eternal peace to the server. No more wars took place, and everyone lived in confusion, wondering how the resident sunshine child was as prehistoric as Philza Minecraft, and yet still called him an old man.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

156.

“We can’t give it to the raccoons, they’ll start chewing people’s faces off.”

“Then don’t give it to the raccoons. Give it to the squirrels.”

“That’d be even worse--”

“Why the fuck are you in my bathtub? How the fuck did you even get in?”

“Hi Jack,” Tommy greeted, craning his head so he could look at Jack from where he was curled in one side of Jack’s bathtub. “Dream and I were just discussing the merits of drugging raccoons.”

“Or squirrels,” Dream added from his side of the bathtub.

“Or squirrels,” Tommy agreed. He pulled the shower curtain aside in invitation. “Wanna join?”

“No! Get the fuck out of my house!”

“Worth a shot.”

---

“Ohhh wait, and then--”

“Yup. We’re going to put the elephant and the child in a room together.”

“What’s this about elephants?” Philza asked. “And why are the two of you in my pantry?”

“You have good food,” Tommy said. To prove his point, he took another bite out of the loaf of bread he was holding. Philza wrinkled his nose.

“Tommy, mate, you’re supposed to slice the bread into pieces before you eat it.”

“No,” was Tommy’s answer. “By the way, did Niki make this?”

“Yep. Got it from her bakery. If I give you another loaf, will you get out of my pantry?”

“Make me.”

Philza turned to Dream, hoping that he would be a reasonable adult - only to find him eating a carrot. By taking bites out of its long side. What the fuck.

“So as I was saying,” Dream said through a mouthful of root vegetable, “Elephant. Child. We need to build an observation deck, though. Maybe under Techno’s house?”

“Sure, but where do we get a child?”

Philza sighed and shut his pantry. He could afford to lose some food, but his sanity couldn’t afford whatever conversation they were having.

---

“--and I’m telling you it’s possible! Just slap a couple billboards around the server, the furries will come *flooding* in--”

Fundy walked into the Community House just in time to catch the tail end of that conversation, took a second to wonder how Dream and Tommy were hanging from the ceiling like that, then registered what he’d heard and walked back out.

Hiding in his house for the rest of the day seemed like a good idea.

---

“And the sand would go great with the parmesan.”

“Right, but I’m telling you the spinach would be better!”

“On *toast*? Nobody puts spinach on toast, you disgusting--”

“Get off my roof,” Purpled ordered. Tommy and Dream both turned to look at him from where they were sitting cross-legged on top of the UFO’s dome.

“Purpled!” Tommy cried. “Tell Dream that nobody puts spinach on toast!”

“Get off my roof,” Purpled repeated flatly. He raised his crossbow. “Now. Or I shoot.”

“But Purpled, your UFO is so nice to sit on--”

Purpled took a warning shot. It missed Tommy’s head by a hair. The teenager yelped and scrambled to his feet, only to slip, fall, and roll right over the UFO’s rim.

“L,” Dream called after him.

---

“--right? It’s a genius plan!”

“Okay, but have we considered the consequences of destroying the moon?”

Tubbo shuffled in and plopped him down on the couch next to Tommy. “I have no idea why you’re in my house or what’s going on, but count me in.”

Dream and Tommy exchanged glances. Tommy raised an eyebrow. Dream shrugged. Tommy turned back to Tubbo. “Sure, Tubs. How do you feel about nuking the moon?”

### **157.** *(credit to Smallest)*

Contrary to popular belief, Quackity could not talk to ducks.

Which was honestly a shame because they would make excellent informants, but hybrid status didn’t really work that way and thus Quackity could not talk to ducks. Just like how Philza Minecraft (allegedly) could not talk to his crows, though for some reason a flock of them followed him around and he could sometimes be seen talking *at* them. Probably some magic bullshit that came with Philza’s rumored immortality or whatever.

Point was, Quackity could not talk to ducks. But at the moment, he really, really, *really* wished he could. Mostly to ask what the *fuck* these two were thinking.

“Why,” he demanded, slamming his bedroom door open. “Why are you like this.”



The two ducks that had moved into his living room (without Quackity's permission, but the man hadn't been able to chase them out yet) blinked up at him, nonplussed. One of them quacked. The other one shuffled a little, then waddled one step forward. They both resumed their rendition of Canon in D.

"It is literally the witching hour," Quackity informed them. "I need to sleep. I have a date tomorrow."

The ducks continued to 'sing'. Quackity took a threatening step forward, but the moment he came within three feet of them they took off. He was forced to duck (*ha*) to avoid concussion à la flying poultry. With a frustrated scream, he slammed the door shut and fell back into bed, stuffing the pillow over his head in the hopes that it would drown out the quacking.

Spoiler alert: it didn't.

---

"You look like shit," were the first words out of Sapnap's mouth. Quackity sent him a disgruntled look.

"Thanks, Sapnap," he drawled. "*Just* what I wanted to hear."

"It's the truth, man." Sapnap stepped closer, reaching up a hand as though to feel his forehead before catching himself and lowering it. "Are you okay?"

"Rough night," Quackity answered. "The Pests kept me up."

"Pests?"

In answer, Quackity jabbed a thumb behind him. Sapnap followed it to the two ducks currently perched a ways behind them, who were watching them with beady eyes. A wide grin pulled at his lips.

"Aww, is Quackity becoming a mama duck? Are those your little ducklings?"

"Fuck no. They're little shits that moved into my living room, and I am fucking *sick and tired* of them squawking 'Never Gonna Give You Up' at the top of their tiny lungs in front of my bedroom door at *two in the fucking morning!*" He directed the last part at the ducks, neither of which appeared concerned by his ire. Pest #1 even began preening. Quackity threw his hands in the air. "See what I mean?! Little shits!"

Sapnap cackled. "Sounds like normal imprinting behavior to me."

"What, did you burst into song at ungodly hours of the morning when Bad adopted you?"

Sapnap shrugged. "Not song, but I *did* burst into flames."

“ . . . Of course you did.”

At that moment, Karl swooped in, all bright colors and brighter smiles. “Quack! Sap! How are you guys?”

“Just *peachy*,” Quackity grouched, then waved off Karl’s look of concern. “No, no, it’s nothing serious. Just some ducks that kept me up last night.”

“ . . . Ducks?”

Quackity pointed at the ducks. Karl blinked. “Ah.”

“So how’s your memory?”

Karl winced. “I didn’t know we planned a date,” he confessed. “But I wrote it down! So technically I didn’t forget!”

Quackity hummed. “And your last memory of me?”

“Waving to you on the road from Las Nevadas.” When Quackity’s shoulders relaxed, Karl beamed. “It’s the right memory?”

“Yep. Looks like you’re getting better.” Quackity nudged Sapnap, breaking the tension. “Okay, enough with the serious talk - where are we going?”

“I heard Niki’s been experimenting with danishes,” Sapnap offered. “Cherry and greek yogurt. You up for something sweet?”

“Hell yes. Niki’s goods are the *best*. Though--” Quackity hesitated, then held up a finger. “I just gotta-- one thing.”

He turned to the ducks. “Stay,” he ordered. “This is for us only. Got it?”

One duck quacked. The other ruffled its feathers and hopped off the path, wandering towards a pond in the distance. Quackity nodded to himself, then turned back to his amused fiancés.

“Right. Let’s go get some danishes.”

---

*Karl stared at him, lips set in a neutral line. His vacant gaze roamed across Quackity’s face. “Who are you?”*

*“Quackity,” Quackity whispered. He reached out, taking Karl’s hand. “Karl, it’s me. It’s Q. You know who I am.”*

*Karl took a step back, jerking his hand from Quackity's grasp. "Woah there. Personal space."*

*"Karl, it's me! You know me!"*

*"I don't," Karl said, and he was already moving away, fading into the distance. Quackity lunged after him, only for a hand to close around his wrist and drag him back.*

*"Where do you think you're going?" The stench of alcohol and cologne washed over him, horribly familiar. Quackity stiffened, cold horror clamping around his heart even as he turned to face his attacker.*

*"Y-your dead," he stammered, trying desperately to tug his wrist free. "You can't-- you can't be here--"*

*"Now whoever told you that?" Schlatt's grasp tightened. "Hey. Stop that."*

*Quackity didn't stop, instead redoubling his efforts. "Let go! Let go of me, you bastard!"*

*Schlatt went still, and Quackity knew he'd gone too far. Slowly, finger by finger, Schlatt released his wrist, and Quackity stumbled back, throwing his hands up as he tried to protect himself from the incoming--*

*QUACK!*

Quackity shot up, panting like he'd run a mile. Something nudged his hand, and he flinched, looking down to see Pest #1 settled on his lap.

"... Fuck," he groaned, slumping forward and scrubbing a hand down his face. He took a moment to slow his heartbeat, breathing in slow, even, strokes. Thankfully, the duck remained docile through the episode. Quackity didn't think he could handle any surprises.

When he'd calmed enough that he could no longer hear his heartbeat in his ears, he folded his hands and stared down at the duck. "Thanks," he said. "For, uh, waking me up."

The duck blinked.

"You probably can't even understand me," Quackity muttered. He shook his head and swept his gaze around the bedroom, noting the open door. That must've been how the duck got in. "Wait, weren't there two of you?"

A glance to the side revealed Pest #2 standing at Quackity's bedside, a communicator clamped in its beak. Quackity stared at it for a moment, then shook his head. "I swear," he muttered. "The two of you are strangely intelligent for a pair of ducks."

Pest #2 flapped its wings and juttied its head out. Quackity rolled his eyes and snatched the communicator away, turning it over to check the time. 5 AM. Not too bad.

He moved to pocket his communicator, only for Pest #1 to peck at him. "Ow! What was that for?"

Pest #1 quacked and whacked his communicator with a wing. Quackity bopped it on the head, stowing the communicator away. “Hey. No. Bad duck.”

The duck glowered.

“Look, I don’t know what the fuck you want from me.”

Pest #1 churred unhappily before settling down in a pathetic ball of feathers on Quackity’s lap. Rather inconvenient, since Quackity had been planning on getting up. He briefly debated the merits of trying to move it, then recalled its caterwauling a few nights before and decided not to risk pissing it off. With a put-upon sigh, he lay back down. A moment later, Pest #2 settled on his stomach.

Quackity drifted off to sleep, nightmares fading beneath the grounding weight of his feathery companions.

---

Quackity took the final two steps up to the altar, stopping a foot away from his fiancés. Karl and Sapnap greeted him with grins, shuffling a bit closer as the last chords of the song rang through the room. Fundy let the sound hang in the air a moment more, then sat back in the piano stool. Foolish, standing behind the altar, adjusted his tie and cleared his throat. “Welcome, everyone. Please be seated.”

The guests sat.

“Sapnap. Karl. Quackity. We’re gathered here today to celebrate. . .” Quackity zoned out in a matter of seconds, letting his gaze wander towards his fiancés. Karl caught his eye and winked, then turned his attention back to Foolish. Sapnap, meanwhile, kept glancing towards the audience. Quackity followed his gaze.

The wedding was a small one, reserved for close friends and family. Most of Las Nevadas were there, with the exception of Purpled, who was currently on paid leave (Quackity’s recompense for blowing up his UFO). Bad was similarly absent, and though he hadn’t been particularly close to Sapnap recently, Quackity could still see the way the blaze hybrid glanced wistfully towards the empty pew beside Sam. Dream was absent as well, for. . . obvious reasons. At least George was present, dressed to his nines and looking fairly awake.

“. . . and now the three will exchange vows. Karl?”

Quackity zoned back in in time to catch the end of Foolish’s monologue. He turned his gaze towards Karl, who *beamed*. “Sap, Q. Thank you so much for your patience through this past year. I know it’s had its rough patches--” Quackity winced internally at the reminder of *that* shitshow of a misunderstanding, “--but we got over them together, and I love you both *so so much* for never giving up on our relationship. I promise to return that patience tenfold, and to never give up on either of you. I promise to be your best friend and platonic husband, to

honor, care for, and cherish you through all life's adventures. I promise to carry you in my heart where I can't take you physically, and. . ." he took a deep breath and met both of their gazes, eyes shining with startling intensity. "I promise that I will never, *never* forget you. You're my foundation, and I'm so honored to be able to spend the rest of my life with you."

Quackity *believed* him. It lifted a weight off his shoulders, a worry he hadn't been able to shake since the three of them had reconciled. He found himself relaxing, nerves draining away as Foolish turned to Sapnap.

"Sapnap?"

The blaze hybrid was trying to play it cool, pasting a wide smirk on his face. His eyes gave him away, though - they were *literally* glowing with excitement. "I'm not a poet like Karl," he drawled, "so I'll keep it simple. I fuckin' love you guys. You're two of my-- my closest friends, and I promise to never take our relationship for granted. I'll always trust you and respect you, laugh with you and cry with you, be at your side through whatever bullshit this server throws our way." He grinned, sharp and sly. "Can't wait to spend the rest of my life with you morons."

Karl slapped a hand over his chest in mock-offense. Foolish made a valiant attempt at maintaining his professionalism, though the corner of his mouth curled up. "Quackity?"

Quackity's heart thudded in his chest. Taking a deep breath, he curled and uncurled his hands. The last time he'd been at an altar like this, his partner-to-be never showed up. But now, looking at the sheer *joy* written across his fiancés' faces, he couldn't help but smile back. Fuck Schlatt. He was gone, and Quackity wouldn't let him drag him down ever again.

"Karl, Sapnap, I love you guys." The words flowed off his tongue, smoothed over by hours spent practicing in front of a mirror. "I promise to encourage you in everything you do, except the stupid things because we all know we're absolute *idiots* sometimes." Karl choked on air, and Sapnap snorted, ears flushing. "I promise to help shoulder our burdens because we're fucking *unstoppable* together. I promise to always treat you like equals, to be with you through whatever happens. And if I lose one of you - wherever you go, no matter how long it takes - I'll always find you again." He was grinning like a fool, but he couldn't care less at the moment. "To the end of time?"

"To the end of time," his fiancés agreed. Foolish nodded-- a signal. Slimecicle rose from the front pew and approached, a ring box in his hands. This was it - the moment they'd been waiting for. They'd gone through arguments and sleepless nights and literal *wars* for this, and looking at his fiancés, Quackity knew it had all been worth it.

"Wha-- what the fuck! No! Get off!"

A disharmonious screech followed by the clanging of piano chords drew the attention of all three fiancés to the piano, where Fundy was being assaulted by a duck who had begun quacking the opening notes of Pachelbel's Canon. Before anyone could react, though, their attention was drawn by another commotion. Slimecicle had lost the rings to a second duck, who had snatched the box from his hands and was now barreling down the aisle like a feathery bullet train.

Quackity sighed. “Well, fuck.”

**158.**

“Dream, you just-- you just lie,” Tommy hissed. “You can’t-- there’s no way you can actually bring people back to life.”

“Wow, you don’t trust me?” Dream pouted. “I’m hurt. Colon open parentheses.”

Tommy stopped halfway to speaking his next line and took a moment to process what Dream had just said. “Did you just. . .”

“What?”

“Did you just read an emote out loud?”

“Maybe. Semicolon close parentheses.”

Tommy narrowed his eyes. “Stop.”

“No. Less than three.”

“Tommy?” Tommy turned at the sound of his name, blinking when he saw Tubbo peeking out from behind Sapnap. The other teen glanced at Dream, brows furrowing. “What. . . what’s happening?”

“Dream’s being a bitch,” Tommy called. He glared at Dream. “No more emojis.”

“Make me. Colon close parentheses.”

Tommy’s face scrunched with disgust. “You are a terrible, horrible person.”

“I know. Caret hyphen caret.”

“I can and will kill you.”

“Okay child. Colon capital D WOAHH WOAHH WAIT--” Dream scrambled back as Tommy took a step forward. “We can talk about this! You don’t need to kill me! If I die, then death is permanent! Wilbur’ll be dead forever!”

“I think he’d understand,” Tommy deadpanned, raising his axe-- only for Tubbo to catch him by the arm.

“Wait, Tommy-- if he can bring Wilbur back. . . we can’t kill him.”

Tommy hesitated, torn between playing by loop script and acting on his burning hatred for the absolutely *cursed* bit Dream was currently pulling. “Right, but what if he uses that as. . . I dunno, leverage?”

“What if someone dies later?” Tubbo countered. “Without Dream, they’ll-- they’ll be gone forever. M’not saying we should just-- let him run around or whatever, but. . . we can keep him locked up somewhere, right? And he can. . . he can revive people! Without hurting anyone else!”

Five tense seconds ticked by. At last, Tommy lowered his axe. “Fine. *Fine*. Do we have anywhere to put him?”

Sam shifted, drawing the attention of the rest of the crowd. “Dream, uh, commissioned a prison a while back. We can put him in there.”

Tommy and Tubbo exchanged glances. “That. . . sounds like a plan?” Tubbo offered. Tommy snorted.

“Hear that, green bitch? You’re going to jail.”

Dream shrugged. “At least I’ll have a house. U-W-U.”

Tommy *twitched*. Slowly, almost robotically, he turned to his fellow looper, who beamed beatifically back at him.

“Sorry Tubbo,” Tommy said. “I changed my mind. This bitch doesn’t deserve to live.”

Ignoring the shouts of alarm, he lunged for Dream.

### **159.** *(credit to ori, Mushroom and hexx)*

“So are you going to tell me why we’re here now?”

“To watch the Red Banquet. Duh.”

“You wouldn’t have brought us here if you hadn’t planned something,” Dream pointed out. “So what is it? More glitter bombs? TNT?” He paused. “. . . Does this have anything to do with why you’ve been spending so much time at Church Prime?”

“Maybe?”

Dream stared at Tommy.

“I might have become a priest this loop,” Tommy admitted.

Dream continued to stare at Tommy.

“. . . and I used my priestly powers to bless the punch. So. It’s holy punch now.”

Dream took a deep, deep breath, and said with feeling, “Tommy, what the *fuck*.”

“Hey, it might break the Egg’s brainwashing bullshit!”

Dream's reply was interrupted by a commotion below. A puddle of punch was spreading rapidly across the table from the cup Bad had knocked over. Bad himself had fallen out of his chair, and was now curled on the floor, hissing in pain. He clutched his head, his fingers spasming as though he was trying to fend off a migraine. Ponk shot to his feet, alarmed, only to fall over a moment later and undergo a similar reaction. Antfrost and Hannah followed soon after, much to the confused terror of their tablemates. By the time Bad had managed to uncurl from his fetal position, over half the banquet attendees were out of their seats, hovering in various states of worry.

"Ugh. . ." Bad was the first to sit up, rubbing at his forehead. He peeled his eyes open, then blinked, gaze affixing on a distant point on the wall.

"Bad," Puffy called warily. "Are you okay?"

Bad promptly burst into tears. "SKEPPY!" he wailed. "Oh no, *Skeppy*, what have I *done*?!"

"Oh," Ponk said a moment later. He sat up, looked at the Egg, then looked at Sam. "Well, shit."

"That's one way to say it," Antfrost muttered, pushing himself up and scanning the room. His eyes were now a violet-tinged blue, still two shades off from their original color but much improved from their previous crimson. At the same time, Hannah had calmly gotten to her feet and turned to address the stunned banquet attendees.

"I was infected by the Egg," she said. Puffy and Sam gaped at her. "The other three were too. This was supposed to be a trap, and we were going to sacrifice you to the Egg, but then we got uninfected. Not sure how, but." She shrugged. "No more human sacrifice."

Above them, Tommy slowly lowered his head into his hands. "What the fuck. That was so fucking easy what the *fuck*."

Dream slapped a hand over his mouth to silence the sound of him absolutely losing it. Thankfully, the chaos below drowned out any laughter that slipped through.

The Egg, having lost most of its followers in a matter of minutes, shrieked with fury. The vines shifted, peeling themselves from the floor and walls and converging on the banqueters. In a moment of sheer insanity, Puffy picked up the jug of punch and chucked it at the Egg. It sailed in a perfect arc, miraculously losing little of its contents, and shattered against the parasite's shell.

The Egg *howled*. Before their very eyes, it shriveled, the holy punch draining its color from it and leaving it looking not dissimilar to a very large raisin. Its vines spasmed violently, slamming into the walls and floor before curling in on themselves and withering. The (former?) Eggpire shuddered in unison as its last cries died away, any remaining signs of corruption fading from their eyes.

"Okay," Sam said into the ensuing silence. "I'll ask. Who spiked the punch with holy water?"



“Excuse you,” Tommy called. “I *blessed* it. It’s holy punch. Like I’d ever water down punch. A crime, that would be.”

“Wh-- *Tommy?*”

“No, it’s the Egg in human form.” At the various horrified stares *that* answer garnered, he rolled his eyes. “*Yes*, it’s Tommy. Have none of you heard of *sarcasm?*”

“You weren’t invited,” Antfrost said. “How did you find out about this?”

“Like any of you were being *subtle*,” Tommy scoffed. “. . . And I might have happened to overhear some things. Just *happened*, mind you. I don’t eavesdrop on purpose, that wouldn’t be very pogchamp of me.”

Dream stifled a snort at the use of an unironic ‘pogchamp’. Tommy bit back a vicious grin.

“So you. . . tampered with the punch?”

“Yes, well, I’m a priest of Church Prime. I blessed the punch, it broke the brainwashing. You’re welcome.”

“You killed the Egg,” Sam said, “with punch.”

“Technically Puffy was the one to kill it.”

“You blessed the punch and it *shriveled the Egg--*”

“It was a pussy for being such a lightweight.”

Dream lost the battle with his laughter, collapsing into loud guffaws. Tommy rolled his eyes.

“I will shove you off this beam,” he threatened. Dream just laughed harder, right up until Quackity’s voice cut through the air below.

“Is that Dream?!”

“Oh shit.”

## **160.** (*credit to ori*)

Tommy sneezed, then sneezed again. Dream wrinkled his nose, taking a step back.

“Allergies?”

“Maybe. Or I caught a bit of a cold,” Tommy grumbled. When Dream’s eyes narrowed, he sighed. “‘M fine. Just some sniffing and sneezing.”

“Last time you got a serious fever, you destroyed half of L’Manberg.”

“Last time was potion-induced. Won’t happen this time.”

“Hmm,” said Dream, with a heavy undertone of *I-don't-believe-you*.

Tommy cheerfully decided to ignore the subtext. “Anyway! I actually gotta get to mining because that’s what I’m supposedly out here to do, so if you could just fuck off--”

“ *Rude*, child--”

“--not a child, *bitch*. Now leave before someone sees you, or I’ll have to shank--”

“I’m going, I’m going!”

---

The next time Dream saw Tommy, they were on opposite sides of a battlefield.

He’d broken off his deal with Eret this time around, so L’Manberg morale was much higher. As a result, the four L’Manbergians - plus Eret, who remained a member of L’Manberg without the Final Control Room - were fighting with more vigor than usual. Dream played his usual part, aiming to cripple, not to kill. He purposefully avoided engaging Tommy in a fight, and Tommy did the same, taking on non-looping opponents to minimize casualties. It wasn’t until their duel - one Dream planned to let Tommy win, since they’d started this loop too late to prevent the whole L’Manberg debacle - that Dream realized something was wrong.

Tommy’s forehead shone with sweat, and even at a distance Dream could see how his steps were slightly off-kilter. What happened? Had he been injured earlier?

“Tommy,” he called, lowering his bow. “You. . . are you okay?”

Tommy blinked slowly, as though he was moving through molasses. His mouth opened and closed. Once, twice. Dream had the presence of mind to throw his bow aside before lunging forward, catching his fellow looper as he crumpled to the ground.

“Tomm--?”

“TOMMY!” Wilbur was on him in the next instant, forcefully dragging Dream and Tommy apart. “What did you do to him?!”

“I didn’t do anything,” Dream protested, but Wilbur was already turning towards Tubbo, who had Tommy cradled in his arms.

“He’s burning up,” Tubbo reported, his voice wavering. “Like, bad. Really bad.”

Wilbur turned back around, fingers curling in the front of Dream’s hoodie, and Dream threw up a hand to catch the punch aimed at his face. He subtly signaled for his allies to stay out of it with his other hand. “Woah woah woah! I didn’t hurt him, I swear! He just has a fever!”

"I'll be the judge of that," Wilbur snarled. He moved to strike again, but Dream grabbed his wrist and *twisted*, forcing him to let go.

"Innocent until proven guilty," he reminded the other man. "And beating me up won't make him better."

Wilbur hesitated. Dream's voice softened.

"Take him back to the base, Wilbur. Here, take these--" he reached for the potions in his inventory, only to realize that it had been emptied for the duel. "--never mind. Sapnap, you have my stuff, right? Can you grab the Healing and give it to them?"

Wilbur narrowed his eyes. "Why are you doing this? What's the catch?"

"No catch. We're all friends at the end of the day, aren't we?" At Wilbur's silence, Dream winced internally. "Or, well, we were. We took this war a little too far."

Wilbur's silence gained a distinctly icy edge. Dream sighed, stepping back and raising his hands. "Look, just-- take the potions, take Tommy back to L'Manberg, make sure he gets better. We'll leave you alone until he's better."

"But *why*?"

"For fuck's sake," Dream muttered, snatching the potions Sapnap held out and shoving them into Wilbur's hands. "Just take the damn things and make sure he gets better."

He spun on his heel and marched off before Wilbur could ask again.

---

"Eret?"

"Wilbur," Eret greeted. "I thought you were going to take a nap."

"I was," Wilbur admitted. "I just. . . couldn't sleep, thinking about-- about Tommy being sick, and Dream, and this war, and--"

"Wilbur."

Wilbur's jaw snapped shut. Eret reached forward to place a hand on Wilbur's shoulder.

"Tommy's going to be fine. It's just a fever. He's going to recover, and then we're going to win independence. Don't stress yourself so much. And for Prime's sake, go take a nap. I know you didn't sleep last night." At Wilbur's petulant silence, Eret sighed. "You know Tommy hates it when you run yourself into the ground."

Wilbur winced. "Low blow."

“I’ll hit as low as I want if it gets you to take care of yourself,” Eret retorted. “Just think of the example you’re setting for the kids.”

“Wh-- they know better than to use me as a role model!”

Eret opened his mouth for a reply, only to inhale sharply. His eyes went wide behind his sunglasses. Wilbur whipped around, heart plunging when he saw the man standing a few feet away.

“Dream?”

Dream blinked slowly at the two of them. He was dressed in nothing but a rumpled green hoodie and sweatpants. His armor, shoes, and mask were conspicuously absent.

Both L’Manbergians pulled out their weapons. “Dream,” Eret said. “Why are you here?”

“Is Tommy okay?” Dream asked. Wilbur shifted, eyes narrowing.

“I don’t see how that’s any of your business.”

“... Wan’ him to be okay,” Dream murmured. Wilbur became suddenly aware of how *strangely* Dream was speaking, words running together like he wasn’t in full control of his tongue. “Tell him to get better soon?” He pulled something from his inventory and held it out to Wilbur. “I got ‘im a rock.”

Wilbur blinked at the proffered rock - a chunk of cobblestone. “Um.”

He was thankfully saved from answering by Sapnap and George, who appeared in twin bursts of violet particles. Before the remains of the shattered ender pearl had dissolved at his feet, Sapnap was already lunging forward, grabbing Dream by the shoulders and dragging him away from Wilbur.

“You *idiot*,” he scolded. “Why the fuck are you out of bed?!”

“Tommy,” Dream said, like that explained everything.

George sighed. “Dream, Tommy’s fine.”

“Sick,” Dream protested, and proceeded to engage in a bout of hacking coughs that had both George and Sapnap stepping away. Wilbur, meanwhile, had come to an unfortunate conclusion.

“He got sick too?”

George and Sapnap pinned him with twin looks, as if to say ‘no shit’. “Come on,” George muttered, grabbing Dream’s arm and tugging him in the direction of the Greater SMP. “It’s not safe to be here.”

Dream remained rooted to the spot. “Tommy,” he insisted. His coughing had left his voice sounding like a grackle’s squawk. Against his will, Wilbur found himself wincing in

sympathy.

Then Eret shifted behind him. “Oh, no,” he whispered. Wilbur tensed, unwilling to take his eyes off the enemy but tempted to turn and assess the new threat. What--?

“Dream?”

Wilbur froze, ice trickling down his spine. The gathered adults turned to see Tommy hobbling towards them, a nervous Tubbo at his heels. “I tried to stop him,” the younger boy babbled. “I’m sorry, I tried but he wouldn’t--”

“Dream,” Tommy interrupted, and Wilbur *stared* as his second-in-command stumbled up to their enemy and proceeded to. . . hug him.

What.

And then Dream hugged him back.

*What.*

They pulled apart before Wilbur’s brain had finished recalibrating. Dream *pouted* at Tommy, an expression *very* out of place on his face. “Your fault,” L’Manberg’s greatest enemy accused, jabbing a clumsy finger at the teenager’s chest. Tommy began giggling for some unknown reason, which only made Dream scowl harder. “Made me sick.”

“Didn’t become a squirrel this time,” Tommy sang. “L’Manberg’s safe.”

“Squirrel?” George asked. Wilbur had no fucking clue, so he ignored the question in favor of focusing on the predicament at hand.

“Tommy, sunshine, it’s not safe--”

Tommy made an unintelligible grumble and flapped a hand in his general direction. “Shut,” he ordered, the syllables tripping off his tongue. ““M talkin’ to Dr’m.”

“Shouldn’t be up,” Dream muttered, then held out the rock. “Here. Got you a rock. Because you rock.”

Tommy stared at the rock for three long seconds, then shrugged and took it. ““Anks.”

“Welcome,” Dream said, completely serious. His next words were interrupted by a sneeze. And then another. Like a chain reaction, Tommy began sneezing as well. The force bowed him forward, straight into Dream, knocking the two of them into a pile on the ground. Their friends all flinched in alarm, but before anyone could actually do anything, Tommy rolled over so he was completely flopped over Dream.

“You make a good pillow.”

“Th’ks,” Dream mumbled. “This grass is comfy. . .”

“It’s L’Manberg grass,” Tommy informed him. “We have best grass.”

“Mm.” Dream was visibly nodding off. “Should. . . sell it.”

“Fuck no.” Tommy yawned, curling so his head lay against Dream’s stomach. “Our. . . grass. No one. . . else. . .”

The L’Manbergians and Dream Team were left staring as the two mortal enemies fell asleep on each other.

Wilbur summed up the situation perfectly. “What the fuck?”

---

“‘Allergies’, you said. ‘A bit of a cold’, you said.”

In lieu of a vocal answer, Tommy raised one middle finger. Dream huffed, only to nearly choke on his congested airways. He spent a few moments hacking into a wad of tissues, then fell back into his pillows.

“. . . Are you feeling better?”

“Mn,” Tommy grunted, which was Tommy-speak for no. Dream nodded, then regretted it when his skull throbbed. He slumped deeper into the pile of cushions behind him, head lolling sideways.

“It is kinda nice,” he admitted. “Not having to worry about stuff for once and just. Resting.”

“Mhm,” Tommy grunted, somehow conveying both ‘I agree’ and ‘shut the fuck up I want to sleep’ in the same sound. Dream rolled his eyes but obliged, letting his breathing even out.

Together, they drifted off to the quiet ambience of a peaceful afternoon.

## Chapter End Notes

Aaa I forgot how nice it was to write fluff

The wedding vows were a p a i n to write. For clarification, karlnapity’s gonna be platonic in this. Because even tho it’s canon I just. Idk I’m not comfortable with writing romance.

[remix!Dream](#) and [the cactus cult loop](#) by by hexx! Ajsdkfjsldk I love their artstyle--

Some really cool [remix!discduo](#) by Yù!

[A perfect representation of ot!Tommy in a nutshell](#) by handdrawnm :D

Awesome doodles of [various loops](#) by astral! Pls check out her very underrated [tumblr](#)

(if you are a c!karl enjoyer like me you WILL want to see her “Enemy” animation)  
Also a [русский translation](#) is now available!! Thank the lovely kuwwizz for that :D

### **Loop Notes**

**156.** In a land as primitive as theirs, space travel was not yet possible. And thus the moon remained un-nuked, much to the relief of the saner members of the server.

Additional note: look up Project A119 and Project E-4.

**157.** Yes, Quackity did end up pseudo-adopting the ducks. They were pests, but they were HIS pests.

**160.** L'Manberg and the Dream SMP were forced to form a temporary truce while Dream and Tommy were sick, because any attempts to separate them ended. . . poorly. This somehow led to everyone staying at the Community House, taking turns caring for the sick - which of course meant that everyone got sick. By the time they'd recovered, neither side was very willing to fight anymore - partially because of the semi-coerced bonding that came from spending two weeks in close quarters, and partially because none of the L'Manbergians could really see Dream as a tyrant after (in a state of extreme delirium) he clung to Wilbur and cried nonstop for a solid *hour* because he was convinced the "giant pink bunnies" were going to eat his hoodie.

And so that's how Dream and Tommy ended a war by getting sick.

# Chapter 33

## Chapter Notes

Hey y'all. I am literally hurtling headfirst into the most stressful semester of my life (college apps + 4 research papers + multivar calc my beloathed) and I actually need to maintain a decent sleep schedule, so updates are definitely going to be pretty slow from now on - probably once a month. I'm really sorry about that.

However, please please PLEASE do NOT pressure me for updates - either by directly asking or by making offhanded comments about how long it's been since I updated. I have a lot on my plate right now and this can't be my main focus.

Anyway, important announcement! ot!discduo is now called glitterduo, courtesy of Lonnie. Hope you all enjoy the chapter :D

### **Spotlighted Comments**

**Crystallcatgamer:** You have u'd your last wu, you double-you you

**Lyrmony:** I feel like the 'giant pink bunnies' are actually the people who'll do a lot of worse things after Wilbur's death and it spirals down from there. An angst analysis of how his trauma is going to eat him alive in a perspective of what he once was, after all, his mask was the only thing that stayed throughout the chaos. colon open parenthesis

**Clearly\_Crystal\_Clear:** Damn imagine finding out you could've ended two of the biggest conflicts on the server by getting sick and drinking religion juice

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

### **161. *(inspired by Sh00k, hexx, and ori)***

This loop had started early.

Dream and Tommy had taken one look at the (fairly) untouched SMP and decided to go full Chaos™. The other members of the server had needed about a month or so to adjust to the sudden *glittery* precipitation and the casual defiance of all known laws of physics, but they came around eventually. Even the newer members were adapting at a decent rate, guided by server veterans.

Unfortunately, neither Dream nor Tommy had considered the possible ramifications of making Chaos™ the normal baseline. Nor had they considered the possibility of non-loopers out-Chaos™-ing *them*. Hence, neither were prepared to face the current situation.

“That,” said Tommy, “is not a cake.”

Tubbo, Niki, and Ranboo fixed him with identical blank stares. “Looks like a cake to me,” Tubbo said.



“That is not a cake,” Tommy repeated. “You-- do you not *see* the reality fuckery it’s-- holy shit, is that the *fifth dimension*?”

Niki beamed, all sunshine and innocence. “Tubbo did a good job with the decoration!”

Because of course Tubbo would decorate a cake with a fucking *spatial anomaly*. Just looking at the monstrosity was giving Tommy a headache. “What the fuck,” was all he could say. “*How* the fuck.”

“Potato battery and a rigged dimensional window,” Tubbo chirped. “Completely edible, don’t worry!”

“Do you want a slice?” Ranboo held up a glowing butter knife. Probably the one Dream had given Niki for her birthday. “It’s got a lot of frosting, but the cake is actually--”

“No way in *hell*. That thing can kill god. I’m not takin’ a bite of it.”

As one, the trio paused. Niki frowned, brow furrowing with contemplation. “. . . Kill god?”

“Kill god,” Tubbo echoed thoughtfully. A wide grin spread across his face. “Wait, this cake *could* kill god.”

It was at that moment that Tommy knew. *He fucked up.*

---

Dream practically squeaked the last syllable of the incantation, his lungs unable to provide air for the words. In this case, though, breathing had been sacrificed for haste. Containing this mess took precedence over basic life functions.

XD appeared in a swirl of green robes and reality-breaking geometry. Dream didn’t even wait for him to finish manifesting before he blurted, “PleasefortheLoveofPrimestophim.”

XD stared at him. Or, well, gave the impression of staring. It was difficult to tell when he didn’t have eyes. “. . . **What?**”

Dream tried to speak, realized his lungs had deflated into 2D, and was forced to indulge his mortal limitations before he spoke again. “Ranboo’s turning *everything* into dried spaghetti. I don’t know why or *how*, but you have to stop him!”

XD didn’t visibly move, but something in his aura *twitched* like a spooked cat. Dream stilled, eyes narrowing before snapping wide with realization.

“. . . You didn’t.”

XD remained silent.

“You *didn't*, ” Dream repeated, horror creeping into his voice. “*Please* tell me you didn't.”

The air around XD grew heavier. Dream got the distinct impression that the deity was *sulking*.

“What the fuck,” he breathed. “What even. . . how. . .”

**“ . . . They threatened me with a cake.”**

“They *what?* ”

---

“I don't want to be here,” Fundy whimpered, hugging his tail as he rocked back and forth. “Please, if-- if anybody out there is listening, *get me out.* ”

“Don't be like that!” Tubbo chirped. He stuck another potato on the massive potato portal he was building in the center of the plaza. “Hey, I think we're getting close to the [infinite potato dimension](#) now! Can you message Techno and let him know we've made a breakthrough?”

Fundy began sobbing.

At the edge of the plaza, Tommy very slowly backed away. He didn't need to be involved in whatever the *fuck* he'd walked into. Unfortunately, he kept his eyes on the most visible threat - which meant he backed right into someone else.

“Tommy!” Niki beamed down at him, eyes shining with mischief. “I was looking for you!”

“No,” Tommy whispered. “No, Niki. Don't do this.”

Niki giggled. It was the most terrifying thing Tommy had ever heard. “Don't be like that,” she chided, one hand closing around his arm in an iron grip. “Come on, I wanted to show you something!”

“No,” Tommy begged.

His last desperate bid for freedom went unheard. Niki cheerily dragged him away.

---

Tommy and Dream stared at the SMP.

Or rather, what remained of the SMP. A good chunk of it had been converted into spaghetti. XD was MIA, possibly dead by cake. Niki had gotten her hands on a *second* butter knife

somewhere in the mix and was now harvesting the pasta, mostly by decimating huge swathes of spaghetti-composed land. As for Tubbo. . . the less said about him, the better.

“This was a mistake,” said Tommy.

“This was a mistake,” Dream agreed. “And someday, we’re going to laugh about it.”

“But not today.”

“Oh, no. Today, we’re going to regret *all* our life choices.”

## 162. (credit to FrOgGy\_hOpZ)

“Welcome to the Little Shop of Regrets! How can I help you today?”

“What the fuck is this place,” was Purpled’s polite reply.

Tommy grinned. “My flower shop! I try out potions on plants, and you get to buy the results.” He leaned down behind the counter and resurfaced with a pot. “Can I interest you in a Stabby Leafshooter?”

“A stabby leafshooter,” Purpled repeated. He squinted at the plant in Tommy’s hands. “. . . What is it?”

“Well, it’s a plant that shoots stabby leaves.”

“Those don’t exist.”

Tommy stroked the green bud in the pot. It furled open, revealing sharp, serrated leaves. Tommy tapped one. The leaf snapped off and zipped through the air, imbedding itself into the ground a few inches away from Purpled’s foot. Purpled stared at it.

“. . . I stand corrected,” he said, then looked up at Tommy. “How much for twenty of those?”

---

“Wait-- George, don’t touch that--”

“Relax,” George muttered. “What’s the worst that could happen?”

Sapnap eyed a plant that appeared to be dripping acid all over its ceramic pot, which was now sporting quite a few unfashionable holes. “Death?”

George scoffed as he poked at something resembling a tulip bud. The petals unfurled, revealing a mouthful of sharp teeth. George squawked like a startled chicken and flung

himself sideways, right into Sapnap. The two of them went down in a flurry of flailing limbs and loud cursing.

Unfortunately, neither man quite grasped the danger of being at eye level with the various plants arrayed against the baseboard of the shop. George had barely managed to disentangle himself when he found himself face to face with a cactus. The cactus raised its arms and grew several pointy spikes.

“Sapnap,” George whispered. “Is that cactus moving?”

“Ah, you met Snuggles!” Tommy leaned forward across the counter, a wide grin splitting his face. “Beautiful, isn’t she?”

Snuggles brandished its sharp spikes and took a step forward. Because Snuggles apparently had legs.

“Oh *fuck* no,” said Sapnap, and set Snuggles on fire.

---

“Why is your cactus on fire?”

“She’s fireproof,” Tommy chirped. “Would you like to take her home?”

“. . . I’ll pass,” Eret said. He shuffled to the side as Snuggles strode past, her burning needles flaring like tiny stars. “Isn’t that a bit of a fire hazard?”

“Oh, no. Snuggles knows to avoid wood structures.”

The door to the shop swung open to admit a new customer. Snuggles instantly changed course, waltzing past a horrified Fundy and into the vast world outside. Fundy watched it waddle away, then turned and stared at Tommy.

“That is not a cactus.”

“Unfortunately,” Eret said, “that is a cactus.”

Fundy nodded slowly, then carefully stepped back out of the flower shop and shut the door.

---

“--and so that’s why I opened a flower shop!”

“Mm-hm,” said Ranboo. He edged away from a flower that had begun making a noise not dissimilar to a dying goat. “That’s. That’s great.”

“Oh, right! I have a gift for you!” Tommy disappeared behind the counter. When he straightened up, he was holding an allium in his hands. “Here! For you, Ran-boob!”

Ranboo eyed it warily, and when it didn’t begin screaming or spitting poison, took it with two fingers and held it as though it was about to bite him. “. . . Thanks?”

“You’re welcome,” Tommy chirped. “Now shoo before Pluto eats you.”

“Pluto?”

Tommy pointed towards the ceiling. Ranboo looked up to see a *very large* venus flytrap grinning down at him.

“Right,” he squeaked, and promptly fled the premises.

### 163. (*inspired by curry powder*)

“OH FUCK NO. NOPE NOPE NOPE WHAT THE FUCK WHAT THE EVERLOVING *FUCK--*”

The eyes on Dream’s mask slid upward in an impression of an eyeroll. “It’s not that bad--”

“IT IS THAT BAD,” Tommy shrieked. “IT’S FUCKING CURSED, IS WHAT IT IS! HOW THE FUCK DID YOU EVEN MAKE THAT ABOMINATION?!”

“It’s not an abomination,” Dream muttered. Tommy shuddered as the mouth on his mask opened and closed in time with his lips. “I just messed around with a few enchantments, keyed the engravings to a mirror matrix. I think it turned out pretty well.”

“You thought *wrong*, bitch.”

“I even added a few extra faces,” Dream continued, blithely ignoring Tommy’s horror. “Here, watch this.”

The face on the mask flipped through a series of expressions: UwU, OwO,  $\geq w \leq$ ,  $\times\_ \times$ , O\_o, ✧w✧,  $\Delta(\dot{\angle})\triangleright$ ,  $\text{ಠ_ಠ}$ ,  $\text{ಠ}\text{益}\text{ಠ}$ ,  $\bullet\_ \bullet$ , and finally. . . L.

Just L.

“Why,” said Tommy.

Dream shrugged. His mask morphed into a  $\neg(\angle)\neg$ . “I feel like I’d use those faces most often, so I might as well put my art skills to use and burn some time enchanting them.”

“Dream, the only thing you can draw is hands.”

In answer, Dream's mask morphed into a horrifyingly realistic depiction of a one-fingered salute. "Yeah, I added those too."

Tommy's voice failed in the face of the monstrosity. He could only stare mutely as the offensive gesture rearranged itself into a (◦`J-)✧. There were no words to describe the sheer *depth* of the terror he was currently experiencing-- but then again, Technoblade did always say the universal language was violence.

Hm. Maybe he was right this time.

". . . Tommy, you okay? You've been quiet-- where'd you get that axe from? Hey, watch where you're pointing th-- wait WAIT WAIT TOMMY WE CAN TALK ABOUT THIS--"

**164. remix, pt. 11** ( [see previous parts of this loop here](#) )

Philza clawed his way through the murky darkness, hands scraping at broken shingles and soot. Smoke filled his nose and he hacked, mouth opening in a soundless scream as he struggled towards the open air. A moment later he broke through the surface, gasping, and with what remained of his strength, dragged himself out of the rubble and into the snow.

He lay there for a moment, staring blankly up at the ash-stained sky. He could hear the fires crackling merrily away at the remains of the house. The cold seeped through the back of his thin cloak - he hadn't had a chance to change into clothes suitable for the arctic yet, not with how frantic their escape from L'Manberg had been. Technoblade had been insistent--

OH FUCK, TECHNOBLADE!

Philza catapulted into a seated position, ignoring the tingling protest of newly-healed bones. "TECHNO!" he shouted. "TECHNO, CAN YOU HEAR ME?!"

"Right here," a voice grunted behind him, and Philza whipped around to see Technoblade trudging towards him. "You okay?"

In answer, Philza held up a spent totem. Technoblade grimaced and held up his own in return. "Glad you had it. If you died. . ."

What would have followed went unsaid. Philza accepted Technoblade's hand, letting the piglin hybrid yank him to his feet. "Did. . . did Dream have a totem?"

Technoblade's expression was answer enough.

Philza's heart sank into his stomach. ". . . Shit. That's-- what, two lives in a day? His-- his spawn was set here, right--?"

"Doesn't matter. The bed's gone."

"So he--"

“Yup.” Technoblade jerked his head to the north. “He’s back at Spawn.”

“Fuck.”

“Won’t have weapons or armor,” Technoblade continued. His voice was oddly flat, detached as though he was observing the scene from a distance. “We should take inventory of what we have, salvage what we can, then head for Spawn. Prime knows he’ll probably need help.”

Philza could only watch as Technoblade rolled up his sleeves and marched into the wreckage, snuffing the smaller fires beneath his boots. About five feet in, he stopped and nudged something with his foot.

“Well, all my pets are dead,” he called. Through the smoke, Philza saw him bend down and pluck an enderpearl - presumably Edward’s - from the rubble. “Chests are gone, potions too. Basement’s buried, and we don’t have time to excavate. Everything we own’s in our inventories now. Good thing we didn’t have time to unpack.”

Philza carefully didn’t look over towards where half the house had collapsed on top of the stables. “Yeah, that’s. . . lucky. Techno, mate, do you want to. . . get back here? Ground might not be stable where you’re standing.”

For several long seconds, Technoblade remained silent. His back was to Philza, shoulders hiked up to his ears and one hand curled around Edward’s pearl. At last, he sighed, audible even over the crackling flames.

“Just. . . give me a minute,” he said. He didn’t turn around.

Philza retreated to a respectful distance and busied himself with sorting through his inventory, taking mental notes of what they had and what they needed. Both he and Techno presumably had enough to last them *and* Dream four days - ample time to set up a new base. Problem was, they needed to find a new place to build; this location was obviously compromised.

Unfortunately, although the Totem of Undying had healed the lingering effects of his scuffle with Tommy, it didn’t fix the physical exhaustion weighing him down. He’d had worse - but if their retrieval mission turned into a fight, things could get messy.

The sound of crunching snow signaled Technoblade’s approach. Philza looked up, meeting his gaze. A familiar *rage* burned in the warrior’s eyes, rekindled by the smoldering remains of his home. Philza recognized that rage, knew it was reflected in his own eyes. Bloodthirst. *Revenge*.

He didn’t comment on it. “Ready?”

“Yeah.” Technoblade adjusted his cloak. His fingers left ashy prints in the cloth. “Before we get Dream, though, we gotta make one more stop. I’m thinkin’ we might need some wither skulls. . .”

---

---

Dream groaned as he was dragged back into the land of the living. Everything *ached*. His newest scars smarted against the fabric of his hoodie. He wanted nothing more than to lie there in the grass and sleep the day away, but that hope was crushed by the snap of a twig.

Dream reluctantly peeled his eyes open. “Hi Tommy.”

“Dream,” Tommy said. He leaned over him, the sun forming a halo of gold around his head. “How’re you feeling?”

“Absolutely wonderful,” Dream deadpanned. “Respawning after being blown to bits is *so* refreshing. We should do this more often.”

Tommy snorted. “Can you walk?”

“Yesn’t.”

Tommy crouched down and slung Dream across his back in a firefighter’s lift. He carefully rose to his feet, paused for a moment to adjust to the extra weight, then turned and plodded deeper into the forest.

“Where are we going?”

“Your base. Or, well, *my* base now.”

Dream side-eyed him. “You didn’t redecorate it, did you?”

“Of course I did. Your taste in aesthetic is *shit*.”

“Your taste in aesthetic is literally just cobblestone--”

“Oh fuck you, I have *nuance* and *sophistication* --”

“--’nuance and sophistication’ my left sock--”

“--mimimi my name is Dream and I think neon green hoodies are fashionable--”

Hidden behind a tree ten feet away, Fundy clutched his bristling tail and watched as Tommy and Dream disappeared into the foliage.

**165.** (*for the previous part of this loop, see 155. in Chapter 31*)

Tommy awoke in a burst of bloodied ash. Shaking cinders from his hair, he squinted at his surroundings through the murky air. Strangely enough, the soot-choked haze didn’t irritate his lungs, and he paused to marvel at it - only to realize that he wasn’t breathing.

A quick glance at his hands confirmed his suspicions: he was a ghost.



Even as this realization dawned on him, the shock numbing his mind began to fade a way. One by one, his memories filed into consciousness - following Niki to gather spruce, Niki screaming at him, and. . . nuke.

Well. At least he knew Niki hated him now. And had hated him for a while. And might have also arranged his death.

He cringed as her face flashed in his mind, wild-eyed and twisted with hate. Shoving that aside for later consideration, he turned his attention to his final moments. The nuke had reminded him of something. Had he been nuked in a past loop? Loop zero? He tried to recall the end of the original timeline, but it fled from his mind every time he got a clear lock on it. Now that he thought about it, his recollection of the final battle itself was pretty fuzzy - he vaguely recalled the meeting leading up to it and the tense hours spent pacing back and forth, but the actual fight was a blur of whirling blades and terror. The clearest thing he could remember was the sting of betrayal when Punz stabbed Quackity in the back. How had the battle ended? Had Tubbo dropped a nuke on the battlefield? It made no sense, but Tubbo was the only one on the server who had nukes - and why else would Tommy feel such *deja vu*?

“T-Tommy?”

Tommy snapped out of his contemplation, turning to see Tubbo and Jack. Both were dressed in hazmat suits, and Tommy realized that they must be in the crater. A quick glance around showed a lump on the ground that might be his corpse.

“*Oh,*” he said, and was faintly surprised when his voice echoed. “*Uh. Hi. Is Niki okay?*”

“Tommy,” Tubbo repeated, taking a step back. “You-- you’re-- dead?”

“*Um,*” said Tommy, because telling Tubbo he’d been hit by the nuke would be a very bad idea. He had to get revived as quickly as possible. “*Where’s Niki? I think-- I think she was with me, when. When I. Uh.*”

A glance at Jack showed that he had a strange expression plastered across his face, something between joy, grief, and guilt. So Jack *had* been in on the plot to kill him. Tommy shuffled that realization away before he could think too hard about it. The mental breakdown could wait until he was alone.

Tubbo’s voice dragged him out of his thoughts. “You. . . you’re not dead, are you? You didn’t. . . there’s no way the nuke hit you.” The teenager smiled, heartbreakingly hopeful. “No, it couldn’t have. Right? Your house is miles away.”

Tommy floundered, unsure of whether to expose his murderers or let Tubbo sink deeper into denial. He didn’t want Tubbo to start blaming himself, but he also didn’t want Tubbo to go on a revenge arc and destroy half the server in an attempt to kill Jack and Niki. “*I. . . dunno?*”

Tubbo stared at him. “You don’t know if you’re dead.”

Tommy shrugged, already backing away. “*Y-yeah. Listen, I-- I gotta go. There’s some shit I need to take care of, big man things to do-- I’ll be back, okay? I’ll talk to you soon, I just-- I*

*need to deal with this."*

He sunk through the bottom of the crater before Tubbo could ask any more questions. Let Jack clean up his own mess - Tommy had some self-reflection to do.

---

Tommy settled against the cave wall, allowing the rough stone to press into his back. He glared at a creeper that had gotten a little too far into his personal space, drawn by his ghostly glow. The creeper hissed and scuttled away. Tommy resisted the urge to flip it off, instead closing his eyes and bracing himself. Puffy's voice echoed in the back of his mind.

*"Breathe. Stay grounded. Be open to admitting when you're wrong, but recognize when you were in the right."*

Tommy breathed. Tommy grounded himself. Tommy considered what Niki had said.

*"YOU'RE SO SELFISH AND STUPID AND YOU JUST DO WHATEVER YOU WANT TO AND YOU NEVER THINK ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES! YOU USE PEOPLE AND THROW THEM AWAY WHEN YOU DON'T NEED THEM ANYMORE! YOU LEFT ME IN MANBERG, LEFT ME WITH SCHLATT WHEN YOU KNEW WHAT HE WOULD DO TO ME!"*

*"You started so many conflicts, all because you couldn't let go of two stupid fucking discs. How many people suffered for your petty power struggles? How many people died?!"*

It was tempting to blame himself. To take Niki's accusations to heart and fall into self-loathing. But Tommy hadn't lived through countless years of war, hadn't gone through several recovery arcs, hadn't scheduled so many sessions with Puffy - just to forget everything he'd learned. So instead he wrangled his thoughts into submission and looked, *really* looked, at the accusations.

First things first. Abandoning her in L'Manberg. That was. . . true, to some extent. In Pogtopia, neither he nor Wilbur had ever considered contacting her or checking how she was doing. Given that both Fundy and Tubbo had been recruited into the Schlatt administration, she must have felt hurt and betrayed and alone. From what Tommy could recall, Schlatt had targeted her, taxing her to the point where she nearly had to close her bakery. It was understandable that she'd wished to be in Pogtopia instead.

At the same time. . . Niki could have left Manberg, could've messaged Tommy or Wilbur for Pogtopia's coordinates and joined them. After all, if *Tubbo* could sneak out of Manberg, why couldn't she? Yes, both he and Wilbur had left her behind in their mad dash from Manberg-- but their *lives* had been on the line, and they'd left Fundy and Tubbo behind as well.

And even if they had taken Niki. . . it likely wouldn't have been the way she envisioned. (Unless her joining *did* change something-- would Niki's presence prevent Wilbur from

descending into madness? He shook off that line of thought and stowed it away for later.) Point was, Pogtopia hadn't been *the greatest* experience of Tommy's life. Nowhere near as bad as Exile, but-- well. He still had nightmares sometimes.

Then there were the discs. He'd given them up so L'Manberg could have independence, and he'd spent a lot of time trying to get them back - but that conflict hadn't really involved anyone except him and Dream. Yeah, Tubbo got dragged in at the end of it - but most of the wars were centered around L'Manberg, not the discs.

That being said, Tommy had to admit that his actions had been a pretty big catalyst for a lot of the events on the server. Antagonizing Dream had been a bad idea from the start, and *yeah*, he'd been a teenager, but that didn't excuse the role he'd played in turning the server into a bloody warzone. Kids on Earth-adjacent servers didn't walk away from jail time just because they were kids. He'd broken Dream's rules, purposefully provoked him again and again. Without his presence, the server would be very different from what it was today.

However, he wasn't the only one at fault - nearly everyone had a part to play in the conflict that followed. He and Dream had certainly had a bigger role in it than others, but Wilbur, Schlatt - heck, even *Technoblade* - had their fair share of blame. The only difference was that some people faced consequences.

Niki had been hurt, and she'd responded like everyone else on the server - by lashing out at the convenient scapegoat. Schlatt and Wilbur were dead, Dream was inaccessible. . . and so she'd focused her rage on Tommy.

Tommy knew that at the very least, he owed her an apology - even an explanation, if she'd be willing to listen to it. But he didn't think he deserved to be murdered. At the very least, Tubbo didn't deserve to live with the guilt (because Tubbo *would* blame himself, idiot that he was).

Unfortunately, Tommy also knew that he needed to talk to Jack. While Niki's motives for killing him were clear, Jack's were essentially one giant question mark. Tommy wasn't quite sure why Jack hated him, but if this loop had taught him anything, the best way to find out would be to ask upfront - and this was a golden opportunity to do it. So he'd have to get it over with as quickly as possible, then get revived and head to Snowchester to before Tubbo did something drastic. Like blowing half the server into oblivion.

With a put-upon sigh, Tommy heaved himself off the floor and set off in search of Jack.

## Chapter End Notes

Y'all. [Astral](#) made a friggin' [ANIMATIC](#) for this fic and I am scREAMING-- go look at it and give it likes and gush about it in the comments or the discord server bcs she poured so much time into this and her work is seriously underrated pls make it rated [RACONINNIT MY BELOVED](#) by el!!!

[Tommy learning Dream's looping too](#) by Penhguin!

[Hilarious, adorable and very accurate gacha animatic](#) by Sage! :D

Lonnie made a [gacha animatic](#) with painfully accurate song choice go check it out— also a drawing of [glitterduo hugging](#) and [this \(if u see it in Italy now you know\)](#)! Also check out this [angst](#) they made :)

Also!! The loop ideas squad in the ot discord began a [spinoff](#) of this series-- go read it!! it's basically free ot content with shorter wait time :D They have access to my ideas document so if u put an idea in the comments here they might write it

### **Loop Notes**

**161.** Tommy and Dream were very careful to keep that trio far, far apart in the future. Especially in loops where chaos became the norm on the server (see: Chapter 24, 117).

**162.** Turns out the allium's special property was to smell like chorus fruit. Ranboo couldn't remember why the flower felt like *home*, but he kept it in his inventory and took it everywhere he went.

# Chapter 34

## Chapter Notes

I said updates would be monthly. I now present you a 6k+ update 13 days after the previous update. Why does this always happen when i say I'm going to write slower?? This chapter is dedicated to ori from the ot discord server, under whose name in my prompts document I have written "At this point there are too many [ideas] to keep track of so just search from:ori in #loop-ideas"

### Spotlighted Comments

**dekiraaa:** fundy seeing disc duo who previously acted like mortal enemies act like brothers: what the actual fuck

**nyanbinary\_87:** the cake may not be a lie but it sure as hell is a monstrosity of a time-and-reality-hopping fifth-dimensional somewhat-metaphorical-chess game!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

### 166. *(credit to ori)*

"So you're saying that Dream and Tommy are dueling."

"Yup," said Wilbur, appearing very invested in the scene before him. "This is the defining moment, Jack. The moment we win independence, or lose it all."

Jack stared at the bridge. On one end stood a cardboard cutout of Tommy. On the other end stood a cardboard cutout of Dream. Both had bows and arrows haphazardly taped to their 'hands'. Neither were capable of using them.

"You. . . do realize those aren't Tommy and Dream, right?"

Wilbur looked at him like he was crazy. "What do you mean? Of course it's Tommy and Dream!" Before Jack could point out the inherent falsity of that statement, Wilbur turned back to the bridge and shouted, "TOMMY, TAKE THE SHOT!"

Sapnap, standing on the other side of the bridge, also began yelling. "DREAM! C'MON MAN, YOU CAN DO THIS!"

A particularly strong gust of wind swept through the area, knocking Tommy's teetering cutout over. Sapnap let out a shout of victory while Wilbur fell to his knees.

"TOMMY! NO!" he wailed, shaking a fist at the sky. Jack thought he even shed a tear. "DAMN YOU, DREAM!"

The cardboard cutout did not reply. Jack wondered if it was too late to leave L'Manberg.

---

“Tubbo. Tubbo, *please*.”

Tubbo looked up from where he was duct-taping an iron sword to ‘Tommy’s’ hand. “Huh? What’s wrong?”

Niki stared at him. “You-- you’re taping a sword on its hand.”

“Tommy doesn’t have the best grip.”

“He *is* still a child,” Wilbur chimed in. “His muscles are still developing, you know? We don’t want him dropping his weapon when we fight Schlatt.”

“That is a *cardboard cutout*,” Niki pointed out. Tubbo snipped off a bit of duct tape and frowned at her.

“Hey, I know he doesn’t talk much, but calling him cardboard’s a bit rude, innit?”

At that moment, the cardboard cutout flopped on its face. The weight of the iron sword had proven too great for its supports. Tubbo nodded sagely.

“See? He’s hurt. You should apologize.”

Niki made a mental note to check if someone had put something in the L’Manberg water supply.

---

“Is *nobody* questioning this?”

“What, the wedding?”

“*Yes!*”

George glanced at the newlyweds, then back to Jack. “I mean, they seem pretty happy together.”

“*Fundy is marrying a piece of cardboard!*”

George wrinkled his nose as he took another sip from his flute of champagne. “Listen, I know Dream isn’t very expressive, but calling him cardboard--”

“That’s *literally* just a cardboard cutout of Dream.”

--is just mean.” George sighed. “Guess you weren’t made best man for a reason.”

“And Fundy’s best man is a *cardboard cutout too--*”

“Hey, Tommy’s a good kid. Can’t you just accept him and Dream as they are?”

Jack made an incomprehensible noise of frustration and stormed out of the post-wedding banquet.

---

“You know, Dream’s been pretty quiet since the Independence War.” Technoblade shifted his copy of *The Art of War* to the side so he could set down his teacup. “I’ve been thinkin’ about puttin’ him in therapy, actually. Get him to talk about his feelings with someone who can help.”

“That’s a good idea,” Philza agreed. He took a sip of his tea, then glanced over at Niki, who was practically strangling her cup with her white-knuckled grip. “Niki? Is something wrong?”

“*Please*,” Niki blurted, on the verge of tears. “*Please* see through whatever witchcraft this is-- I don’t know *why* you all think that’s a *real person--*”

“Hush Niki, enjoy your tea.” To punctuate his point, Philza reached across the table and refilled her teacup. “You’ve been so rude ever since Dream joined our book club. He just doesn’t talk much. Don’t judge him for that-- it hurts his feelings.” He turned to his left, where ‘Dream’ had been propped up in a chair. “Are you okay, Dream?”

The cardboard cutout continued to stare blankly at the rapidly-cooling tea set in front of it. Philza nodded like it had poured out the contents of its nonexistent soul to him and turned back to Niki. “See? You shouldn’t judge him so harshly.”

Niki gave up all decorum, put her face in her hands, and *sobbed*.

---

“So how was your vacation?”

“Poggers,” Tommy chirped. “Man, Tubs, it’s good to see you. How’s L’Manberg been?”

“Pretty good! We’re operating as a stable democracy now. Wilbur just brokered a trade deal with Dr-- *ahem*, George last week.”

Tommy stopped in his tracks. “Wait, *George?*”

Tubbo blinked at him. “Yeah? Dream ran off for his own vacation about a day after you - declared George king of the SMP first, so he took over ruling duties.”

“Huh,” Tommy said. “I missed a lot.”

Tubbo snickered. “Oh, you *did*. Prime, Tommy, it’s been a long three months-- I have *so* much to tell you.”

Tommy side-eyed him. “Do I want to know?”

“Oh, definitely.” Before Tommy could question *that* ominous statement, Tubbo jabbed a finger at the horizon. “Look! It’s Jack!”

Tommy turned. Indeed, Jack Manifold stood stock-still on the Prime Path. His gaze bored into them as they approached.

Brushing Jack’s strange expression off as surprise at his appearance, Tommy strode up to him and offered him a handshake. “Ay, Jack Manifold! Haven’t seen you in a while, how are you? How’s the hotel business going?”

Jack stared blankly at them. “No,” he said, and promptly turned and walked away. Tommy blinked at his retreating back, then lowered his hand and turned to Tubbo.

“. . . Did I say something wrong?”

Tubbo was laughing too hard to reply.

---

“Sounds like George’s been doing a pretty good job.”

“Don’t sound so surprised,” Sapnap joked. Dream rolled his eyes, turning away from the newly-built Kinoko sector of L’Manberg. He caught sight of a figure standing several feet away.

“Oh hey, it’s Niki. Niki!” he called, waving at her. “Hi!”

Slowly, Niki turned around. She stared at him for a long moment. Gradually, Dream began to realize something was *off*-- her hair was unkempt, her eyes wild, and her hands were clenched into shaking fists.

“*You*,” she snarled with the burning hatred of a thousand suns.

“M-me?” Dream glanced at Sapnap for help, but the other man was indisposed; he appeared to be choking on his tongue with the effort of keeping his laughter contained. Dream turned to Niki. “D-did I do something wrong?”



Niki made a sound not dissimilar to a cat with its tail stepped on, hands twitching like she wanted to reach out and throttle Dream. She opened and closed her mouth several times, unable to express the sheer extent of her *rage*. At last she let out a frustrated shout, flung her arms towards the sky, and stormed away. Dream watched her go in bewilderment, then turned to Sapnap.

“ . . . What did I do?”

Sapnap, who had by now managed to wrangle his howling laughter into something resembling regular respiration, merely brushed a few tears off his face and waved a hand. “Follow me, there’s-- there’s something you *have* to see.”

### 167. (*credit to ori*)

“So let me get this straight.” George propped his goggles up on his head so he could pinch the bridge of his nose. “The three of you go off the grid for *two days*, sending half the server into panic and starting an impromptu manhunt - and you’re telling me you married a *cactus*?”

“Technically, Dream was the one who married the cactus,” Sapnap muttered. “I was just there as the best man.”

The glare George leveled at him would have killed a lesser man. As it was, Sapnap quailed and fell silent.

“Snuggles is my platonic soulmate,” Dream said.

“Thank you, Dream, for your valuable and completely unasked for input.” George held up a hand when Dream opened his mouth. “No. Don’t say anything. Punz, I trust you to be sane - what the *fuck* happened?”

“You see,” Punz drawled, “Dream found a cactus. He liked the cactus. He named it Snuggles, decided to platonically marry it, and enlisted me to act as the officiant in the wedding. Sapnap made him promise a long time ago that he’d be the best man at his wedding, so. . . we ran off, found a secluded location, had the ceremony, and came back as soon as we were done.”

George’s eye twitched. “. . . Right. And why did this take *two days*?”

“Honeymoon.”

George’s eyebrow began twitching as well.

“I have Snuggles’s wedding dress if you don’t believe me,” Dream offered.

“Do you have the brain cells you lost?”

“Now that’s just mean, Gogy,” Sapnap scolded. “Just because he married a cactus--”

“Seeing as you apparently didn’t protest this decision, I think you might have lost your brain cell as well. Singular. Because you only have one.”

“It’s his *platonic soulmate*-- ”

“It’s a *cactus*, Sapnap!”

Dream interrupted their conversation by shoving an album into George’s hands. “We took a ton of pictures on our honeymoon! Look, we shared a coconut on the beach--”

George stared blankly at the first photo, which depicted Dream and the cactus sitting across from each other. A coconut sat on the table between them, two colorful straws sticking out of its thick shell. A vibrant sunset backlit the two of them in gold. It would have been very artistic. . . if not for the cactus.

“Snuggles loves coconut juice,” Dream continued, blissfully unaware of George’s growing headache. “Coconuts are her mortal enemy. Drinking their blood gives her strength.”

“Why didn’t you stop this?” George asked Punz.

The mercenary shrugged. “It was funny. And the cactus paid me.”

“I’m sorry, the *cactus* paid you?”

“Showed up at my front door with a few blocks of netherite,” Punz confirmed.

George felt the sudden, intense urge to go back to bed.

---

Wilbur, charismatic politician and possessor of the silver tongue, was speechless as he stared at his greatest enemy. When he finally regained his voice, he stammered out, “Why are you carrying a-- a cactus?”

“Snuggles is my platonic soulmate,” said Dream. He affectionately patted Snuggles - who had been safely nested in a sturdy cross-body sling over his netherite armor - then carefully plucked the cactus spines from his fingers. “Aw, Snugs, you shouldn’t have!”

Wilbur glanced past Dream to Dream’s fighters, gaze meeting George’s. *Has he gone insane?* His expression seemed to ask.

*Probably*, George’s expression said back.

Wilbur raised an eyebrow. *Is he serious?*

*Oh, definitely.*

Wilbur nodded slowly. “Dream,” he said aloud. “How exactly. . . did you and Snuggles meet?”

To his surprise, Dream’s entourage let out a unified groan. Dream, for his part, *lit up*. “Well, it all started when I stumbled across this *gorgeous* desert biome--”

---

Dream slammed his hands down on the prosecution stand. “Snuggles saw Tommy set the house on fire!”

“Snuggles isn’t a viable witness,” Tubbo countered. “Also, Snuggles should take the witness stand if it wants to testify.”

Sapnap, looking unduly amused by the whole affair, set Snuggles - pot and all - on the witness podium. Dream pointed at the cactus. “She’s on the witness stand, and she’s testifying that Tommy burned the house down--”

“Again,” Tubbo said, sounding incredibly tired, “Snuggles isn’t sentient. Please stop trying to use a cactus as a witness.”

“Snuggles is a *real person*. She has the *right* to testify.”

“Dream, for the last time-- *Snuggles is a fucking plant*.”

---

“I’m not homeless! Snuggles and I share a very nice cottage.”

“I’m sure you do,” Technoblade deadpanned. “Speaking of, where exactly is ‘Snuggles’? I thought you two didn’t go anywhere without each other.”

Dream drooped, giving off the distinct impression of sulking. “. . . We had an argument,” he admitted. “She told me to give her some space.”

“L,” Technoblade said unsympathetically. “Now if you’re done crying about your nonexistent social life, the door’s thataway.”

“Wait, you still haven’t told me where Tommy is--”

“Bye, Dream.”

---

“It’s over,” Tommy snapped. He took a step forward. “Give up, Dream.”

Dream shrunk into the wall, glancing wildly around. As Tommy approached, he took a deep breath. “SNUGGLES! HELP!”

The cactus was situated on the other side of the hall. At Dream’s cry, it stepped out of its pot, sauntered over to him, and proceeded to slap him in the face.

“What the fuck,” said Fundy. The cactus turned with a saucy flourish and flounced away. The crowd parted like the Red Sea before it, leaving a clear path to the Nether portal.

“NOOO!” Dream wailed. “SNUGGLES, COME BACK!”

His cries went unheeded. The cactus marched onwards towards the portal.

“What the fuck,” Fundy repeated. The sentiment was echoed by several other members of the server. Neither the cactus nor the now-sobbing Dream appeared to hear them.

Fundy turned to Eret. He pointed at the cactus. “I’m not hallucinating, right? The cactus is walking?”

“You’re not hallucinating,” Eret assured him. At the look on Fundy’s face, he reached over and gave him a commiserating pat on the shoulder. “It’s going to be okay.”

The cactus disappeared into the portal. Behind them, Dream’s sobbing reached a fever pitch. Fundy leveled a perfectly deadpan look at Eret. “Is it? Is it really?”

“. . . I have no idea,” Eret admitted. “Does hearing it make you feel better, at least?”

“Not really.”

“That’s fair.”

## **168.** *(credit to ori)*

Tommy wiggled the snow-crusts off his feet and kicked them onto the mat. Tubbo helped him out of the heavy overcoat, which was tossed onto the coat rack.

“This fuckin’ snow,” Tommy grumbled as he unwrapped his scarf. “I don’t get how you live here, it’s *cold*.”

“Well, you see, there’s this wonderful thing called fire--” Tubbo cut himself off when Tommy whacked him in the arm. “Okay, okay. Yeah, it’s cold, but I like it here. Peace and quiet, you know?” He beamed and turned away, leading Tommy down the hall. “Glad you could make it, bossman. Come on in-- Ranboo made spaghetti!”

The susurruration of socks against wooden floorboards stopped short. Tubbo glanced back to see Tommy frozen midstep, his expression twisted into something resembling horror.

“Spaghetti?” he said.

“Yeah?”

“Ranboo. . . made spaghetti?”

“Yes, he did.” Tubbo frowned. “Do you not like spaghetti?”

“I have *trauma*,” Tommy whispered.

“Tr-trauma? Because of spaghetti?”

“ *Yes.* ”

Tubbo nodded slowly. “Okay. I can go ask Ranboo to make something else?”

Tommy shuddered. “It’ll have spaghetti in it. He puts it in *everything*. It *becomes* everything. Nothing he touches is safe.”

“Ooookay,” said Tubbo. “Why don’t you sit down?”

“*The house isn’t safe,*” Tommy hissed. “*Ranboo is in the kitchen, and thus everything is spaghetti. Our actions are arbitrary when we are nothing but pieces of processed wheat.*”

“Right,” Tubbo sighed, grabbing Tommy by the shoulders and steering him into the living room. He attempted to push the taller teen onto the couch, but Tommy resisted.

“It’s spaghetti,” he insisted. “I won’t touch the spaghetti.”

“Tommy, it’s a *couch*. I built it myself. There isn’t any spaghetti in there.”

Tommy eyed the couch with suspicion, but when no anomalous pasta appeared, he allowed Tubbo to settle him onto it.

“Stay,” Tubbo ordered, then headed down the hall to the kitchen. He knocked on the doorframe to announce his presence, but the sound was lost under the sizzling of oil.

Ranboo stood with his back to him, tail flicking happily as he stirred something in a pot. The rich aroma of spaghetti sauce hung heavy in the air. Tubbo took a moment to appreciate it, then cleared his throat and called, “Ranboo!”

Ranboo jumped, nearly dropping his spatula. He whipped around, revealing the eye-searingly neon “Make Eye Contact At Your Own Risk” apron Tubbo had gotten him as a gag gift for Christmas. Ranboo unironically loved it.

“Oh! Tubbo!” He hastily turned down the fire so the sauce wouldn’t burn. “The sauce is almost done-- it’s turning out better than I expected. Is Tommy here yet?”

Tubbo grimaced. “Yeah, about that. . . I don’t think Tommy can eat spaghetti, Ranboo.”

“What? Why not?”

“He’s. . . scared of it?”

“He’s scared of-- of *spaghetti*?”

“Apparently. Either way, it might not be the best thing to feed him.”

“Oh.” Ranboo’s tail drooped. “Okay.”

“You can store it for tomorrow,” Tubbo suggested. “We can eat it ourselves.”

The statement had the desired effect. Ranboo brightened up, already turning towards the shelves where the glass containers were stored. “Yeah! I’ll put this away and start something else up. Go check on Tommy, make sure he’s doing okay.”

Tubbo returned to the living room to see that Tommy had migrated to the floor. He was in the middle of poking the couch with his sword when Tubbo cleared his throat.

Tommy jumped, which was quite an impressive feat given that he was currently sitting cross-legged. “FUCK! Don’t sneak up on me like that!”

“Sorry,” Tubbo lied. “What are you doing to my couch?”

Tommy made an attempt to hide his sword behind his back. “. . . Nothing?”

Tubbo pinched the bridge of his nose. “Tommy.”

“Tubbo,” Tommy parroted, and tried to subtly slide his sword into his inventory. The flash of light that accompanied inventory use destroyed whatever subtlety the action had. “I wasn’t! See?” He held up his empty hands.

Tubbo debated the merits of kicking his friend out of the house before he caused property damage. Fortunately for Tommy, Ranboo appeared before he could reach a conclusion.

“Tubbo?” The enderman hybrid poked his head into the room. “You said no spaghetti but I already cooked the noodles, so I chopped them up and made some, uh, *innovative* mac and cheese instead.” He held out a steaming bowl, from which wafted a heavenly scent. “Do you want to try it--?”

The window shattered. Tubbo whipped around to see that Tommy had physically thrown himself over the couch and through the bay windows of the living room in a desperate attempt to escape Ranboo and his bowl of pasta.

Ranboo blinked at the shattered glass. “. . . Is my cooking that bad?”

“Your cooking is wonderful,” Tubbo assured him. “I just think Tommy has some *really bad* trauma he needs to work through.”

“I see,” said Ranboo in a way that meant he did not see at all. “I . . . I guess I’ll go make some soup then? Maybe he’ll like that better?”

“You do that. I’ll go drag him back inside before he freezes to death.”

**169.** (*credit to ori*)

### ***TW: Implied/Referenced Suicide***

Ever since Tommy came back from exile, he’d been. . . odd.

When he stepped into a room, the air would cool a few degrees. His voice sounded *off*, hollow and layered with a slight echo. At night, his skin seemed almost luminescent. He avoided physical contact like the plague. Mobs avoided *him* like the plague. His movements were quiet as death - he’d accidentally scared several people when he’d come up behind them without announcing his presence.

Tubbo tried to brush it off. Surely it was just a side effect of not seeing Tommy for so long, or a trick of the light, or his guilt-ridden imagination. Exile changed people. Besides, Tommy would tell him if something was wrong - so Tubbo never brought it up.

Later, he’d wish he had.

---

There was a body in the lake.

Philza squinted at it through the ice. It was mostly hidden from view, partially covered by boulders, and with the low lighting and the depth of the water, he couldn’t tell who it was. Maybe a villager? But the nearest village was miles away, and what scraps of clothing Philza could see didn’t resemble villager robes.

He crouched lower by the edge of the lake. Daylight was fading fast; if he wanted to retrieve it, he'd have to hurry.

### **Group Chat: Sic Semper Tyrannis**

<Philza> *I found a body*

<Ranboo> *who?*

<Technoblade> *where?*

*<Phllza> no idea*

*<Phllza> a lake, bout 1 km from the house*

*<Ranboo> has anyone died recently?*

*<Technoblade> not that I know of*

*<Technoblade> Phil? Niki?*

*<Nihachu> I don't think so*

*<Nihachu> maybe its a villager?*

*<Phllza> maybe, but unlikely*

*<Phllza> im going to try to fish it out*

*<Technoblade> Don't drown*

*<Phllza> thanks for the confidence*

He snapped the communicator shut and shoved it into his haori pocket before shedding the article of clothing and dropping it into the snow. He shivered as he placed his hat on top of it and kicked off his sandals. Trudging back to the edge of the lake, he removed a pickaxe from his inventory and broke a hole in the ice. Fixing his eyes on the body, he dove in, biting back a grunt when the icy water engulfed him. He swam down as quickly as he could, forced to shut his eyes against the freezing liquid, and grinned in victory when his fingers brushed the soft silt floor of the lake. He fumbled around, grasping blindly for the body.

His fingers closed around something. He pulled, and the telltale click of bone against bone, muffled by the water, echoed in his ears. He pushed off the lake bottom with his feet, kicking back towards the surface.

His hands met ice. He nearly panicked, then remembered his pickaxe and broke through. He heaved himself onto the solid ice with a gasp, pausing for a moment to regain his breath before heaving the body out as well. Shaking his head, he dropped it and wiped at his eyes with his sleeves, a fruitless endeavor since his sleeves were soaking wet as well. He wiped his hands against the snow in an attempt to rid himself of any residue from the body.

With that done, he struggled to his feet and trudged back to shore. He wrung the water from his clothes as best as he could before slipping his dry haori back on. When he could stall no longer, he closed his eyes, took a deep breath, and turned around.

The body laid sprawled in an undignified position across the ice, one hand half-laying in the water. Parts of it were nothing more than bone, flesh eaten away by rot and the inhabitants of the lake. Its clothes were nothing more than faded rags. The cold air did nothing to hide the stench rising from it.



One identifying feature remained: something around its neck, hidden by the rest of the body.

Philza carefully slid back onto the ice, using his pickaxe to drag the body towards him. He grabbed it once it was close enough and flipped it over onto the snow. The thing around its neck clinked against bone. He crouched closer to inspect it.

It was a thin metal chain, rusted and somewhat eroded, with no gleaming that indicated enchantments of any kind. It was circular, looped around the neck of the corpse-- a necklace, so probably not the cause of death. A compass hung from the end, its glass surface cracked and battered. The needle, however, was pointing insistently in one direction. He cautiously picked it up and turned it over in his hands.

*Your Tubbo* was engraved in the back of the compass. An engraving Philza had seen many times before - on the compass around Tommy's neck.

He stared at it for a long moment, unbelieving, then dropped the compass like it had burned him. His fingers were shaking from more than the cold as he fumbled with his coat, withdrawing the communicator.

## **World Chat**

*<Philza> TOMYM*

*<Philza> HAS ANYONE SEEN TOMMY*

*<Technoblade> what happened*

*<Dream> I talked with him like an hour ago. is he ok?*

*<Philza> WHERE IS HE RIGHT NOW*

*<Philza> TOMMY*

*<Dream> what happened???*

*<Philza> THE BODY*

*<Philza> IT HAS TOMMY'S COMPASS*

*<Tubbo\_> bdoy?*

*<Ranboo> Phil found a body*

*<Tubbo\_> ah*

*<Philza> the body has tommy's ompass*

*<Tubbo\_> no tomny has his com*

<Tubbo\_> *HAS ANYONE SEEN TOMMY*

<Awesamdude> *I saw him five minutes ago at the hotel*

<Awesamdude> *he was okay*

<Philza> *Tommy please say something*

<Tubbo\_> *@TommyInnit where are you???*

---

"Shiiiiiiiit," Tommy hissed, watching as Tubbo and Philza had simultaneous meltdowns in the world chat.

He'd made a bet with Dream at the end of the last loop - whoever's death was discovered first this loop would owe the winner an item of their choice. When Tommy found himself trudging through the tundra in nothing but a t-shirt and shorts, he'd decided to take advantage of his very human-unfriendly surroundings. So he went ghost, kicked his body into the convenient lake nearby, and went off on his merry way to L'Manberg.

See, ghosts were nothing more than globs of ectoplasm shaped to reflect the self-image of the soul fragment they contained. All Tommy had to do was to see himself as still alive, and voila - he had the appearance of being alive. It wasn't perfect, of course - he was a bit glow-in-the-dark, and rather cold to the touch, and also incapable of imitating a heartbeat or normal bodily functions - but it had been enough to fool everyone.

Except then Philza Minecraft decided to go ice fishing. And now Tommy's charade was dangerously close to discovery.

He could play it off. Act confused, pretend he had no idea what was going on. Or he could run, except running would throw everyone else into a panic which in turn would make them investigate more which would increase the chances of his death being discovered. The third option was to tell the truth. Which was *not* an option at all, because Tommy was going to *win* that bet.

Pretending ignorance it was.

## **World Chat**

<TommyInnit> *huh?*

<Tubbo\_> *TOMMY*

<TommyInnit> *wait what the fuck is hpapening*

*<TommyInnit> why tf do I have like 80 unread messages*

*<Tubbo\_> TOMMY ARE YOUO KAY*

*<TommyInnit> im fine*

*<TommyInnit> whyre you all freaking out*

*<Technoblade> backread*

*<TommyInnit> oh*

*<TommyInnit> huh???*

*<TommyInnit> no I have my compass its right here*

*<TommyInnit> phil you sure it wasnt a mistake*

*<Philza> it has “your tubbo” carved in it*

*<TommyInnit> what the fuck man*

*<Philza> dont ask me*

*<Tubbo\_> tommy where are you*

*<Tubbo\_> tommy*

*<TommyInnit> near the hotel*

*<TommyInnit> chill the fuck out clingbo i’m fine*

*<Awesamdude> where?*

*<TommyInnit> under the path*

*<TommyInnit> holdon*

*<Awesamdude> he’s here*

*<Awesamdude> he’s okay*

*<Tubbo\_> oh thank prime*

*<Tubbo\_> i’m coming over.*

*<Philza> what do I do with this body*

*<Awesamdude> keep it*

*<Awesamdude> we need to examine it later*

*<Ph1lza> where do I keep it???*

*<Technoblade> your house*

*<Ph1lza> techno*

*<Ph1lza> I can't just dump this on the floor*

*<Technoblade> why not*

*<Ph1lza> I*

*<Ph1lza> I have no words*

*<Awesamdude> leave it where you found it*

*<Awesamdude> send the coordinates. I'll go over with Tommy to look at it tomorrow*

*<Tubbo\_> I'll go with you!*

*<TommyInnit> do I have to go*

*<TommyInnit> the tundra is fucking cold*

*<Awesamdude> either go or give me the compass*

*<Awesamdude> why are you using your comm? were standing right next to each other*

*<Ph1lza> I'm leaving it here. going home my clothes are freezing*

### **Private Messaging: Technoblade**

*<Technoblade> Tommy*

*<TommyInnit> what, bitch*

*<Technoblade> how did you know the body was in a tundra?*

*<TommyInnit> my amazing powers of deduction*

*<Technoblade> oh?*

*<TommyInnit> phil literally lives there*

*<Technoblade> huh*

*<Technoblade> not gonna lie, I'm not totally sold on that explanation*

*<TommyInnit> fuck yuo techno*

*<Technoblade> eloquent as ever, I see*

### **Private Messaging: Dream**

*<Dream> hahahahahaahahaha*

*<TommyInnit> shut the fuck up bitch*

*<Dream> sorry I can't hear u over the sound of me winning*

*<TommyInnit> your reading a fukin message*

*<Dream> sorry i can't see ur messages through the sight ur blinding stupidity*

*<TommyInnit> FUCK YOU*

*<Dream> :)*

*<TommyInnit> I HAVENT LOST YET*

*<Dream> but ur very veeeery close*

*<TommyInnit> dream*

*<TommyInnit> i will carve out your insides wit a rusty spork*

*<TommyInnit> do not test me*

*<Dream> 1. I dont have insides*

*<Dream> 2. you can't murder the dead, ghost boy*

*<TommyInnit> watch me.*

---

"It really is an exact replica," Sam muttered, turning the two compasses over in his hands. "Down to the cracks and everything, except Tommy's isn't rusted."

In the end, Tommy had gone with Sam. He wasn't exactly sure how ghost biology worked, but when he'd died, everything had sort of become. . . a part of him. He no longer needed to wash his clothes or mend his shoes; all damage would disappear within an hour or so. He'd torn the hem of his shirt once out of curiosity, and the torn piece of cloth had dissolved into nothing when he'd thrown it away.

It was due to this that he didn't want to part with the compass. It wasn't the original compass, more like a ghostly replica, but it functioned the same as the real one. Problem was, if he handed the compass to someone else, would it just dissolve?

So instead of handing it over, he had gone with Sam. And now he kinda regretted it, because his own corpse was just plain *freaky*. The rot made it unrecognizable, but he still got goosebumps every time he looked at it.

"Tommy? You okay?" Tubbo shuffled next to him, alternating between staring at the corpse and staring at Tommy.

"Yeah," Tommy muttered. "Just. . . creeped out."

"Tubbo, come here for a second," Sam called. Tubbo hurried to the hybrid's side. "Do you have your compass?"

"Y-yeah," Tubbo said, pulling the compass out of his inventory and handing it over. "Here."

Sam took it, turning it over in his hands. Tubbo shuffled back, face twisting.

"Prime, it smells," he muttered to Tommy, pressing a sleeve to his nose. Tommy pushed down the urge to snap '*excuse you*'. That would have raised questions he didn't want to answer.

Sam stood from where he'd crouched over the corpse, turning towards the two boys. His gaze remained fixed on the compass. "It's just spinning," he called.

Tubbo shrugged. "It's been broken for a while," he called back. "I don't know why."

Slowly, Sam looked up. Tommy felt a chill race down his spine.

"Tubbo," the creeper hybrid said calmly, "Compasses spin when their enchantments break. Compass enchantments break when the thing they're keyed to gets broken. Or, in the case of living people, *dies*."

Tubbo spun, staring at Tommy. Tommy let out a nervous laugh and casually began backing away. "Haha, uh, weird. Must be malfunctioning."

"Tommy," said Sam, still terribly calm. "Could you give me your wrist?"

"Mmm. . . no."

"Why?"

"Because I don't want to."

Sam lunged forward. Tommy backpedaled, but he wasn't quite fast enough. Sam's fingers closed around his wrist-- and then sunk *through* it.

The three of them froze in a perfect tableau of shock. Four seconds ticked by before Tommy shifted and let out a nervous laugh.

“Okay, so maybe I’m a *bit* dead. But it’s-- it’s fine! I still have all my memories and everything--”

Sam staggered back, face ashen. “*When?*” he choked out. “When did-- *when did you--*”

“Um. Exile? I ran away from Logstedshire and spent a little too long in the tundra-- oh shit Tubbo wait no don’t cry it’s not that bad Tubbo nooo--”

---

Tommy scowled at the wall as though it had personally offended him. It was a very nice wall, all things considered - light blue, with a painting of a flower hanging on it. Unfortunately, what the wall *represented* was much more irksome.

Tubbo and Sam, after absolutely *flipping out* about Tommy’s less-than-alive status, had insisted that he stay at Sam’s house for the time being because he “couldn’t take care of himself”. Thing was, Tommy was a *ghost*, and thus had no need to “take care of himself”. Unfortunately, his friends were still alive and couldn’t understand that ghosts just *didn’t need* to sleep. Or eat. Or attend therapy. Sure, he liked Puffy, but he was beyond help at this point. What did Tubbo and Sam even think Puffy could do? Therapize him back to life?

Dream rose through the floor, radiating smugness. “Imagine getting caught.”

Tommy glared harder at the wall. “Fuck you.”

“Wow, I’ve never heard that one before. Creative.”

“*Fuck you.*”

Dream cackled. “Should’ve burned the body.”

“I was in the middle of the *tundra*, how was I supposed to start a fire--”

“--then pick a better spot to die--”

“--I *looped in* when I was almost to Techno’s, I wasn’t gonna make it back to Logstedshire even if I tried--”

“--but you could have at least put some distance between you and the house! Just remember, you owe me a cat potion--”

“Oh *fuck off--*”

Their argument was interrupted when the door slammed open. Sam barged into the room, sword in hand. “Tommy, are you okay?! I heard shouting--”

He stopped short and stared at Dream. Dream, who was currently floating in the air, offered him an awkward wave. “. . . Surprise?”

Sam dropped his sword.

“Right,” said Dream. He slowly began sinking into the floor. “I’ll just. . . go now.”

“N-no, wait,” Sam stammered. “You’re-- you’re dead too?!”

“Ahaha. Long story.” Only Dream’s head was visible now. “Tommy, you explain to him. I’m not dealing with the consequences of my actions. Bye.”

“Oi, don’t make me clean up after you-- *get back here, you fucker!*”

**170.** (*credit to ori*)

***TW: Buried Alive, Graphic Injury, Implied Death***

“Hey. . . Tommy.”

“What?”

“Bet you. . . you can’t. . . outlive me.”

Tommy turned his head, glaring at Dream through the darkness. “We’re stuck in a f-fuckin’ cave-in,” he wheezed, “and you’re betting on which one of u-us-- *hck-- dies* first.”

Dream’s right shoulder twitched in an imitation of a shrug. “Not making. . . it out of. . . of this. Might as. . . might as well.”

Tommy’s had to admit he had a point. Even if they could free themselves without bringing the rest of the rubble down on their heads, both of them were too injured to move. “F-fine,” he hissed. “I bet a-- *ah-- gapple.*”

“Coward’s bet.”

“Shut th-the fuck up,” Tommy choked out. He was lying on his stomach with a heavy slab across his back, and every inhale sent fire streaking up his spine. “I’m not the one bleedin’ out.”

“Shut,” Dream muttered. The lower half of his body was pretty much completely pulverized, and another boulder had him pinned by the left arm. “You’re one. . . to talk, internal blee. . . ding.”

“I said b-bleedin’ *out*, not in.”



Dream snorted, then let out a distinctly pained noise as he tried to move something he shouldn't have. "D-didn't know. . . there were caves. . . under L'Manberg," he rasped.

"There are c-caves under-- *ow, shit*-- under everyth-thing, *idiot*."

The two of them lapsed into silence for several minutes. Tommy was just about to check if Dream had died yet when the man spoke up.

"I'm sorry."

Tommy's incredulity was obvious even through the strain in his voice. "Th-the fuck? What for?"

"My fault. . . you're here."

"Listen, bastard, you c-couldn't ha-have known you were standing in a b-bad spot when W-Wil pressed the button. A-and I tr-ried to save your-- *agh*-- a-ass of my *own fr-free will*."

"Should have. . . let me fall."

"L-like *hell*. Stop being d-dumb." To accentuate his point, Tommy flicked a pebble in his direction.

Dream huffed out something that resembled a laugh. "Okay, child."

"Oh, *fuck you*."

They fell into silence once again, though this one was far more comfortable than the last. With some discomfort, Tommy managed to flip his head onto the other cheek. He traced the patterns in the stacked stones with his eyes, idly counting the seconds until the darkness claimed them as well. The distant sound of dogs barking reached his ears, and he frowned, heart sinking as he realized that the battle was still going on above them.

He turned his head back towards Dream. "H-hey, Dream."

"Mm?"

"D'you--" Tommy paused to spit blood to the side, "D'you think Techno's still gon-na use the withers?"

Dream hummed a vague non-answer. Tommy glowered at him.

"Oi. You're n-not falling asleep o-on me, are you?"

"No," Dream slurred. In the dim light, Tommy saw him shake his head as though he was trying to stay awake. "With. . . withers. . . I hope not."

Just as the words left his lips, a muffled screech reverberated through the debris - followed by a chain of explosions. The rubble around them *trembled*, and Tommy could only curse as stones began sliding loose.

Dream let out something between a sob and a moan of despair. “Oh no no no *no--*”

With a terrible, grinding *roar*, the rubble shifted. Tommy cried out as pebbles rained down on him, leaving bruises along his shoulder blades and the back of his head. The slab across his back slid forward, pressing deeper, and something *cracked*.

Tommy couldn’t quite hold back a scream. White starbursts flashed in his vision as blood filled his mouth, and he clawed senselessly at the ground in a futile attempt to relieve the pain. By the time the roar in his ears had subsided, he’d managed to wrangle his howls into strangled, intermittent gasps.

The rumble of shifting rock subsided. In the resounding silence, Tommy peeled open his eyes and took stock of the situation. It was even darker now, any remaining light from the surface completely smothered by the stone. The slab that had been putting pressure on his spine had now entirely crushed it, taking a good chunk of his internal organs with it. He wasn’t going to be alive for much longer.

Still, he forced himself to turn his head. The space where Dream was lying had been completely buried. Only his right hand was still visible, a pale shape poking out from beneath the rubble.

“Dream. . .?”

Silence was his only answer. Tommy choked out a laugh, reaching out and letting his own hand fall inches away from Dream’s. His eyes slid shut as numbing agony radiated up his spine.

“Ha. . . I win, bas. . . tard.”

## Chapter End Notes

Funny story about 169: I actually had an abandoned oneshot from last year that filled this prompt (minus dream and the time loops). I’m really glad I could reuse some of the stuff :D

An amazing drawing of [remix!dream](#) by zax!!!

New [inspired work](#) (slightly darker timeloop fic aaaaa /pos) go check it out!

### **Loop Notes**

**166.** Originally, Dream and Tommy had gone on a vacation to see if things would be more peaceful without them. They made the mistake of telling the others they’d be on vacation. Jack and Niki, who were not in the joke, did not have a good time.

**167.** Tommy had a lot of fun making the tiny wedding outfit for the cactus. There was also a cactus hostage plot at some point in the drafting stage of this loop, but it got scrapped because it got too far past the line of “reasonable levels of crack”.

**168.** Thankfully, the soup did not have spaghetti in it.

**170.** Dream, having lost two lives earlier in the timeline, did not respawn. His and

Tommy's corpses were later discovered during the rebuilding process. By that time, Dreaxter and Toast were already several miles away, trying their hand at another cottagecore arc.

And yes, Toast did get his gapple.

# Chapter 35

## Chapter Notes

Hi guys. Sorry for the delay. The past month has been absolutely potato and I don't have enough energy to respond to all the comments. I promise that I still read and adore each and every one of them <3 hopefully next chapter I'll be up to it again  
Take care of yourselves, and I hope you all enjoy this chapter!

### Spotlighted Comments

**Anime\_Lover268:** Sam during the end of the ghost loop: what the FUCKITY FUCK

Both Tommy & Dream: L

**Lyrmony :** Loop 170: \*exists\*

And here I am getting crushed by angst. Wait- I mean- \*gets shot\*

**Crystalcatgamer:** It's all ori? Always has been

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

171.

“WHAT THE FUCK IS THAT. WHAT THE *FUCK IS THAT?!’*”

“I can’t decide if it’s cute or disturbing,” Eret muttered, sidestepping to avoid Tommy’s flailing arms. “It looks like it’s staring into my soul.”

“It is,” Tubbo assured him. “You want to hold it? We’ve been calling it a furby, because Fundy is still in denial that he’s a furry.”

“I am *not* a furry!” Fundy shouted, hoisting his own furby like he was about to chuck it at Tubbo’s head. “And it’s *not* a furby, it’s an Autonomous Emotional Support Companion--”

Tubbo nodded. “Yup. A furby.”

“I’m not seeing the ‘emotional support’ aspect,” Eret admitted. He frowned as the furby Tubbo had handed him opened its eyes with a mechanical whir. “Is it. . . sentient?”

“Maybe!” said the furby.

Eret stared at it. “Huh,” he said, then turned to Tommy. “Hey, Tommy. Do you want to hold it?”

“FUCK NO!”

---

“So,” said Dream. “Care to explain why the building is on fire?”

“He did it,” George and Punz said in unison, pointing to Sapnap. The blaze hybrid squawked like an offended parrot, but when Dream turned to level him with a flat stare, he deflated.

“Look, I panicked.”

“You. . . panicked?”

Sapnap nodded. “I was-- I woke up, and my bed was *surrounded* by these-- by these *things*.” He shuddered, a haunted look passing over his face. “Fuck, I can still *see* their cold, dead, eyes. . .”

“. . . What things?”

Sapnap grimaced. “I-- I dunno what they were, but, they were about this big-- furry, different colors - looked kinda like robots. I’m not sure. They were all chanting in this-- this *creepy-ass* language. So. So I panicked. And.”

“And you set the house on fire.”

“. . . Yes.”

Dream pushed his mask to one side just so he could pinch the bridge of his nose. “Are you sure you weren’t dreaming?”

“I don’t *think* I was?”

Dream made a mental note to check if Tommy had done something this loop. The only change they’d made was introducing Fundy and Tubbo to Sam - that shouldn’t derail the timeline so early, right?

*Right?*

---

Schlatt walked into his office.

“*Hello!*” said the fuzzy abomination on his desk.

Schlatt stared at it, then pinched himself to make sure he wasn’t dreaming.

The fuzzy abomination clacked its beak and burped. “*Hello?*”

Schlatt slowly backed out of his office and shut the door. He breathed a sigh of relief when nothing tried to burrow through the wooden paneling.

“*Hello!*” said the fuzzy abomination sitting on the floor behind him.

Schlatt screamed.

---

“Look, Tubbo, not that I’m not glad to see you again and all, but--” Tommy gestured to the furby, “--*why the fuck* did you bring that with you?!”

“Emotional support,” Tubbo said. He patted his furby on the head. “Also because Schlatt’s *terrified* of them.”

Wilbur eyed the furby with equal parts wariness and intrigue. “He’s terrified of them, you say?”

“Yeah! Oh, speaking of-- Fundy and I designed a long one to screw with him.”

“A . . . long one?”

“Mhm!” Tubbo pulled a . . . *long* furby from his inventory and held it out. “His name is Benson the Second!”

“You gave it arms,” Tommy whispered, backing away. “Why the *fuck* did you give it arms?”

“Extra mobility! Look!” Tubbo dropped it on the floor and flipped the switch.

The furby lay still for a moment, then exclaimed “*You didn’t pass the vibe check!*” and began *crawling towards them*.

Tommy shoved Wilbur towards the furby and *ran like hell*. His pseudo-brother’s screech of terror echoed off Pogtopia’s walls, soon joined by Tubbo’s maniacal cackling.

Tommy wiped away a tear as he sprinted up the stairs. Wilbur’s sacrifice would not be forgotten.

---

Dream leaned forward, ignoring the sting of rough concrete against his palms. The rooftop really wasn’t the most comfortable stakeout, but it was a good vantage point for reconnaissance. Tubbo’s impending execution was unfolding below, which meant that the

changes they'd made hadn't been major enough to derail the timeline. Good. He and Tommy had *plans* for this loop.

Onstage, Technoblade was waffling nervously between shooting Tubbo or setting him free. Strangely, Tubbo didn't appear very scared. In fact, he seemed almost. . . confident.

Dream's musings were cut short when Tubbo did something *very timeline-divergent*. "You can't kill me," he declared, "because I have *this!*" He pulled a fluffy white creature (?) from his inventory and brandished it like a shield.

Dream *stared* as both leaders of Manberg underwent a visceral reaction. Schlatt threw himself into the waterfall, paddling all the way down in a desperate attempt to get away. Quackity went bone-white and crossed himself before falling backward in a dead faint. Technoblade looked at the creature, looked at Quackity's unconscious body, then looked at Tubbo.

"What," he said.

Tubbo shrugged. "I might have gone a little overboard with the furbies."

*"What."*

"I had to have fun somehow!" Tubbo beamed at Technoblade. "So are you gonna let me out now?"

Technoblade pointed at the creature. "Put that away first."

Tubbo pouted, but obligingly stowed the creature in his inventory. Technoblade wordlessly tore down the concrete, hoisted Tubbo up by the waist, and tridented away.

Dream was left staring down at the Festival that had gone very, *very* differently from loop zero.

". . . What just happened?"

---

### **Private Messaging: TommyInnit**

<Dream> *what was the thing tubbo used today*

<Dream> *the white thing*

<TommyInnit> *You don't want to know.*

---

“GO FORTH, MY BRETHREN, AND VANQUISH!”

Tommy stared at the veritable *army* of furbies converging on a mildly terrified Technoblade. “Tubbo,” he said. “What the fuck.”

Tubbo shrugged. “I wanted to say the line.”

“*What. The fuck.*”

“It’s working, isn’t it?”

Tommy took a glance at the battlefield. Technoblade was putting up a decent fight, but even he could not stand against the horde of mechanical abominations. “. . . Where the fuck did you even find the time to make all those?”

“Sam helped! He and Fundy did some redstone stuff, automated manufacturing for the more complicated parts-- things were a lot faster after that.”

On the other side of the battlefield, Dream swooped in on a horse. He pulled Technoblade up, then swung his steed around and ran for the hills. The furbies followed, chanting “*Violence! Violence! Violence!*”

Tubbo sighed. “Man, I thought they’d put up more of a fight. Welp!” He cracked his knuckles and turned to Tommy. “That’s the traitor dealt with. Schlatt’s dead, we got L’Manberg back, and now Wilbur’s the president again. Speaking of. Where *is* Wilbur?”

“Wilbur. . .?” Tommy spoke absentmindedly, gaze fixed on the horde in the distance. Tubbo sent him a sideways glance.

“Yeah? Wilbur, y’know? Tall bastard, president of L’Manberg?”

Tommy blinked, then straightened in alarm. “Oh shit, I forgot about Wilbur!”

---

“There *was* a special place, but-- but it’s not *there* anymore, you know, it’s not--”

Philza crossed his arms, tamping down his rising anxiety as Wilbur’s hands drifted closer and closer to the button. “It *is* there,” he interrupted. “You’ve just won it back, Wil.”

Wilbur’s pupils constricted, and Philza forced himself not to take a step back as a mad grin carved itself across his son’s face. Wilbur looked *unhinged*, his insanity laid out for all to see. He took a deep breath as though he was about to begin shouting - only to freeze when a staticky voice echoed down the corridor.



*“Hello!”*

The color *drained* from Wilbur’s face. Philza spun and reached for his sword, only to curse when he realized the server-hop had emptied his inventory. He settled into a defensive stance, ready to take down whatever threat was approaching.

*“Hello!”* said the voice again. A tiny hand came into view and dug itself into the ground. Wilbur whimpered.

Philza stared as a long pink *thing* dragged itself around the corner, its arms bending in ways that should be anatomically unfeasible. It came to a stop about five feet away, blinked up at the two of them, then opened its beak.

*“Did you pass the vibe check?”*

Wilbur *screamed*.

**172.** (*inspired by A\_Non\_ymousWriter*)

*“--and that’s why Tommy’s secretly immortal!”*

Philza stared the four conspiracy theorists. The fringes of Sapnap’s hair were smoking, not that he seemed to notice. Both Fundy and Tubbo appeared to be vibrating at near supersonic speeds thanks to the sheer amount of caffeine they’d ingested. Wilbur, who had been the one heading most of the presentation, was panting like he’d run a mile. When Philza failed to react with little more than a slow blink, he slammed his hand against the evidence board hanging on the wall behind him, dislodging a few of the red strings crossing it.

*“See?!”* his eyes shone with manic energy. *“Immortal!”*

Philza pinched the bridge of his nose. *“Wilbur, mate. . . how much sleep have you gotten in the past week?”*

The four exchanged glances. *“More than six hours?”* Tubbo offered. *“I think?”*

*“Okay. And this theory is based off of. . . what, one thing Dream said?”*

*“. . . Yes?”*

*“He could have been joking.”*

*“But he *wasn’t*,”* Sapnap hissed. His hair was now on fire. Philza eyed him for a moment, then nodded decisively.

*“. . . Right. All of you to sleep. Now.”*

All four opened their mouths to protest. Philza, being the responsible adult he was, hit them with a Potion of Weakness and watched as they promptly passed out. It wasn’t quite as good

as natural sleep, but Prime knew the boys needed any form of unconsciousness they could get.

With a huff, he rolled up his sleeves and set about carting them off to their homes.

---

Philza grinned as he ducked under Tommy's swing, driving his own fist into Tommy's stomach. The teenager parried at the last minute, redirecting the blow with a practiced tap and clamping a hand down on his shoulder. A leg hooked around Philza's knee and *pulled*. A moment later, Philza found himself blinking up at the sky.

"Oof," he huffed, raising his hands as Tommy moved to pin him. "I give, I give. You got me good with that one."

"Damn right I did," Tommy cheered. He reached down and helped Philza to his feet, then turned to Dream and Wilbur, who appeared to be having a very engaging conversation on the sidelines. "OI, BITCH! DID YOU SEE ME WIN?!"

"Yes, Tommy," Dream and Wilbur answered in unison. Then they glared at each other.

Philza snorted, dusting dirt off his back. Something was itching at the back of his mind, a sense of *offness* he couldn't shake. He frowned, trying to pinpoint the cause, and replayed the final moments of the spar in his mind. Now that he thought about it, the move Tommy had used seemed. . . familiar. *Very* familiar.

"Hey, Tommy." Philza was careful to keep his voice light. "Where'd you learn that move?"

Tommy shrugged. "Saw you do it once. Thought it was pretty cool, so I taught myself."

Philza forced his lips to curve into a friendly smile. "I see," he said. "That's not an easy one to teach yourself."

Tommy went off on a tangent about his great imitation ability and how "*big man TommyInnit's a fast learner! There was this one time I tripped Dream with his own attack--*" Philza tuned him out, instead mulling over this new information.

There were several things wrong with Tommy's statement. First, it would be physically impossible to learn such a complicated move simply by seeing it once. Even the best warriors Philza had encountered in his lengthy lifespan had needed guidance to master the nuances of the movements. Philza himself had learned it from a master in hand-to-hand, but the woman was long dead by now - Tommy couldn't have learned it from her. Second, Philza had *never* performed the move in front of Tommy. It was meant to disable, not to kill, which meant he'd only use it in spars or arena battles. Third, Philza rarely sparred hand-to-hand with Technoblade these days, and even then, Technoblade knew the trick well enough to avoid it - which meant the only time Tommy could have seen it would have been in the arena.

Philza's last arena battle had been almost a century ago.

Maybe Wilbur's crazy theory wasn't so crazy after all.

---

"So, mate, I heard Tommy's older than he looks."

Dream didn't look up from his drawing. ". . . Yeah? I mean, I thought that was common knowledge."

"It's not," Philza said. "Care to elaborate?"

"Well. . . you said it already. He's older than he looks."

"Wilbur said you said he was 'almost as old' as me."

"Yep." Dream dragged his pencil across the paper, leaving an elegant curve of graphite. Philza's eye twitched.

". . . I'm immortal, Dream."

"I know."

"Tommy isn't immortal," Philza tried.

"Well, he's almost as old as you."

By the gods, this man was either an idiot or being purposefully dense. "I saw him as a child. Immortals don't age that fast."

Dream just hummed. Philza narrowed his eyes, taking a moment to think through what he knew.

Immortals were players who aged as normal until they were blessed (or cursed, depending on who you asked) with immortality, at which point their bodies would become functionally frozen in time. No immortal Philza had met had been immortal from birth, nor had any spontaneously aged up in the middle of their life. Besides, Philza had *been there* for a good chunk of Tommy's 'childhood' - he'd *seen* Tommy grow from a toddler to a gangly, long-limbed child. There was no way the kid was almost his age; even if he had been frozen in time prior to Wilbur finding him and then grown up, what god would bless a *toddler* with immortality?

Unless. . . he was going about this all wrong. He expected Tommy to be immortal *like him*, but perhaps this was a new form of immortality. Reincarnation, maybe? It would explain why Tommy grew like a mortal, but held knowledge from well before his time.

His musings were interrupted when Dream set his pencil down with a *clack*. “Perfect!” the man cheered. He slid the paper across the table. “Here, this is for you.”

Philza looked down at the messy sketch of an ancient, balding version of himself. “Thank. . . you?”

“You’re welcome!”

Philza resisted the urge to wipe that vacant grin off of Dream’s face. Yeah, this man was *definitely* being dense on purpose - partially to get on Philza’s nerves, but also to protect Tommy. Now the question was, *why*?

Why did Dream evade every question about Tommy’s age? And how did he know in the first place?

---

“We’re running out of string,” Sapnap noted.

Philza hummed, then jotted down *REINCARNATION* on a sticky note and slapped it on the board. Wilbur peered over his shoulder, eyes widening when he saw the word.

“Wait,” he whispered. “*That actually makes so much sense.*”

“You’re welcome,” Philza deadpanned. He tossed the sticky notes back to Sapnap, who caught them with ease. The blaze hybrid studied the object in his hands, then looked up at Philza.

“You didn’t believe us before,” he said. “Why’d you change your mind?”

“Tommy knew some things he shouldn’t,” Philza muttered. He changed the subject before Sapnap could ask him to elaborate. “Where’re Fundy and Tubbo?”

“In the workshop,” Wilbur said. “They’re testing out a new approach.”

“A. . . new approach?”

Something exploded in the distance. A voice that sounded suspiciously like Fundy followed a moment later. “*Dammit, Tubbo! Not again!*”

Philza stared at the smoke rising over the horizon, then leveled a flat stare at Wilbur. The man grinned sheepishly.

“I mean, as long as they have results. . .”

---

“Just take it.”

Philza eyed the scorched walls of the workshop. “It’s not going to explode, is it?”

Fundy sighed, shoving the device forward. “No, it’s safe. The explosion was just Tubbo fucking around with bombs.”

“And. . . *why* was Tubbo making bombs?”

“Because he’s Tubbo. Look, this isn’t going to explode. Trust me.”

With great reluctance, Philza took the device. It was a small, rectangular box, plain save for the delicate lines of redstone laid across its surface. The top half housed a glass case containing three number wheels. As Philza watched, the wheels inside the glass case began to spin.

The device hummed for a bit, flipped this way and that, and finally settled on a 234. Philza turned, opening his mouth to ask about its significance, then stopped short when realization hit him like a truck.

“This. . . is this a fuckin’ *age counter*?”

“Best way to describe it, yeah,” Tubbo said. He craned his head to peer at the numbers.

“Wow, you’re *ancient*. ”

Philza consciously chose to ignore that comment. “How exactly does it work?”

“Player code.” Philza’s eyes widened, but Fundy hurried on before he could react. “It’s just a scan! It doesn’t do anything, I promise-- we did a lot of testing before we tried it!”

“A *lot* of research,” Tubbo added cheerily. “Spite is a great motivator.”

Philza pinned them with his Disapproving Parent look. “Messing with player code is dangerous. Even *admins* can’t access that information - how did you get a scan of it?”

“Medical technology in the Europe server is pretty advanced,” Tubbo chirped. “I pulled some strings, committed some minor theft, and--” he gestured to the device.

“Sapnap also asked George to get XD on board. Turns out even *god* has no idea how old Tommy is.”

Philza resisted the urge to find a nice pillow somewhere and scream into it. “. . . Do I want to know what ‘minor theft’ entails?”

“No,” Fundy said. Tubbo just *smiled*.

---

“TOMMY!”

Tommy looked up from the seam he was stitching, blinking at the group that approached him. “Fundy! Hey man, how you doing?”

“Great, awesome-- I just need you to hold this for a second.”

Tommy automatically took the object held out to him. “This isn’t a bomb, is it?”

Fundy spluttered. “Wha-- *no!* Why does everyone keep asking that?!”

“Cool. Just double checking.” Tommy squinted at it. “What the fuck am I supposed to do with this?”

“Just hold it and show us the numbers!”

Tommy raised an eyebrow but obeyed Tubbo’s orders. The group watched with bated breath as the counter spun. And spun. And spun, all the way up to 999, where it stopped, shuddered, and broke into two neat halves.

“Um.” Tommy looked at Fundy. “Was it. . . supposed to do that?”

“Holy shit,” was Fundy’s answer. “You’re older than Philza Minecraft.”

“I’m. . . what?”

“That counts age,” Philza supplied, staring at the broken device. “You’re. . . you’re older than *me*.”

Tommy visibly bluescreened. “. . . No I’m not?”

“Player code doesn’t lie.”

Tommy looked down at the device. “Huh. Wait, this reads player code? Can it tell me how old I am?”

Philza would’ve been more worried about Tommy’s apparent lack of concern about machinery interfering with the *building blocks of his existence*, but he was too busy freaking out about *Tommy being over four times his age what the fuck*. “Mate, how the fuck are you still alive?!”

Tommy opened his mouth. Closed it. Opened it again. “Uh. Good question.”

Five seconds of awkward silence dragged by. “Well?” Philza prompted. “You don’t grow like any immortal I know, and I can’t feel any Blessing on you. So how’d you become immortal?”

“. . . I ate my vegetables.”

“. . . Excuse me?”

Tommy looked him dead in the eye. “I ate,” he enunciated, “My. Vegetables.”

“But that’s not--”

“How do you know it’s not?” Tommy sniped back. He stood, stowing his sewing project in his inventory. “Oh shit. I just remembered that I forgot to turn off my stove.”

“Tommy, you don’t have a stove.”

“It’s a new installation. Fuck off.”

“Tommy--”

“Nope. Bye.”

---

### **Private Messaging: TommyInnit**

*<TommyInnit> hey dre*

*<TommyInnit> drem*

*<TommyInnit> dream*

*<Dream> ???*

*<TommyInnit> guess what*

*<Dream> what*

*<TommyInnit> we’re older than philza minecraft*

*<Dream> .*

*<Dream> huh.*

*<TommyInnit> yeah*

*<TommyInnit> tubs & fundy made a machine to read age and shit*

*<TommyInnit> prob bcs of the age conspiracy*

*<TommyInnit> rest of the server’s gonna know by the end of today so watch uot for thaf*

*<Dream> i see.*

*<Dream> brb gonna go have a midlife crisis*

<TommyInnit> *have fun*

173.

Quackity rolled his shoulders, letting his breath hiss through his teeth. This was it. This was the moment he'd been working toward for so long. Dream had *finally* given up the secrets of the revival book. Now all he had to do was use them.

He double-checked the pile in front of him, counting out the bones and the single ram's horn set in the center. All good. He'd cleared his schedule for the day, his office doors were locked - nobody would disturb him.

He summoned the journal from his inventory, wrinkling his nose as he peeled apart the grime-stained pages. He should've made Dream wash his hands before he began writing, but the past was in the past. As long as he could read these words, he could complete the revival.

It was at times like these that he was eternally grateful that his past business ventures had forced him to learn the phonetic pronunciations of the galactic alphabet. He cleared his throat, took a deep breath, and began chanting.

“𐄂𐄃𐄅𐄆𐄇𐄈𐄉𐄊𐄋𐄌𐄍𐄎𐄏𐄐𐄑𐄒𐄓𐄔𐄕𐄖𐄗𐄘𐄙𐄚𐄛𐄜𐄝𐄞𐄟𐄠𐄡𐄢𐄣𐄤𐄥𐄦𐄧𐄨𐄩𐄪𐄫𐄬𐄭𐄮𐄯𐄰𐄱𐄲𐄳𐄴𐄵𐄶𐄷𐄸𐄹𐄺𐄻𐄼𐄽𐄾𐄿𐅀𐅁𐅂𐅃𐅄𐅅𐅆𐅇𐅈𐅉𐅊𐅋𐅌𐅍𐅎𐅏𐅐𐅑𐅒𐅓𐅔𐅕𐅖𐅗𐅘𐅙𐅚𐅛𐅜𐅝𐅞𐅟𐅠𐅡𐅢𐅣𐅤𐅥𐅦𐅧𐅨𐅩𐅪𐅫𐅬𐅭𐅮𐅯𐅰𐅱𐅲𐅳𐅴𐅵𐅶𐅷𐅸𐅹𐅺𐅻𐅼𐅽𐅾𐅿𐆀𐆁𐆂𐆃𐆄𐆅𐆆𐆇𐆈𐆉𐆊𐆋𐆌𐆍𐆎𐆏𐆐𐆑𐆒𐆓𐆔𐆕𐆖𐆗𐆘𐆙𐆚𐆛𐆜𐆝𐆞𐆟𐆠𐆡𐆢𐆣𐆤𐆥𐆦𐆧𐆨𐆩𐆪𐆫𐆬𐆭𐆮𐆯𐆰𐆱𐆲𐆳𐆴𐆵𐆶𐆷𐆸𐆹𐆺𐆻𐆼𐆽𐆾𐆿𐇀𐇁𐇂𐇃𐇄𐇅𐇆𐇇𐇈𐇉𐇊𐇋𐇌𐇍𐇎𐇏𐇐𐇑𐇒𐇓𐇔𐇕𐇖𐇗𐇘𐇙𐇚𐇛𐇜𐇝𐇞𐇟𐇠𐇡𐇢𐇣𐇤𐇥𐇦𐇧𐇨𐇩𐇪𐇫𐇬𐇭𐇮𐇯𐇰𐇱𐇲𐇳𐇴𐇵𐇶𐇷𐇸𐇹𐇺𐇻𐇼𐇽𐇾𐇿𐈀𐈁𐈂𐈃𐈄𐈅𐈆𐈇𐈈𐈉𐈊𐈋𐈌𐈍𐈎𐈏𐈐𐈑𐈒𐈓𐈔𐈕𐈖𐈗𐈘𐈙𐈚𐈛𐈜𐈝𐈞𐈟𐈠𐈡𐈢𐈣𐈤𐈥𐈦𐈧𐈨𐈩𐈪𐈫𐈬𐈭𐈮𐈯𐈰𐈱𐈲𐈳𐈴𐈵𐈶𐈷𐈸𐈹𐈺𐈻𐈼𐈽𐈾𐈿𐉀𐉁𐉂𐉃𐉄𐉅𐉆𐉇𐉈𐉉𐉊𐉋𐉌𐉍𐉎𐉏𐉐𐉑𐉒𐉓𐉔𐉕𐉖𐉗𐉘𐉙𐉚𐉛𐉜𐉝𐉞𐉟𐉠𐉡𐉢𐉣𐉤𐉥𐉦𐉧𐉨𐉩𐉪𐉫𐉬𐉭𐉮𐉯𐉰𐉱𐉲𐉳𐉴𐉵𐉶𐉷𐉸𐉹𐉺𐉻𐉼𐉽𐉾𐉿𐊀𐊁𐊂𐊃𐊄𐊅𐊆𐊇𐊈𐊉𐊊𐊋𐊌𐊍𐊎𐊏𐊐𐊑𐊒𐊓𐊔𐊕𐊖𐊗𐊘𐊙𐊚𐊛𐊜𐊝𐊞𐊟𐊠𐊡𐊢𐊣𐊤𐊥𐊦𐊧𐊨𐊩𐊪𐊫𐊬𐊭𐊮𐊯𐊰𐊱𐊲𐊳𐊴𐊵𐊶𐊷𐊸𐊹𐊺𐊻𐊼𐊽𐊾𐊿𐋀𐋁𐋂𐋃𐋄𐋅𐋆𐋇𐋈𐋉𐋊𐋋𐋌𐋍𐋎𐋏𐋐𐋑𐋒𐋓𐋔𐋕𐋖𐋗𐋘𐋙𐋚𐋛𐋜𐋝𐋞𐋟𐋠𐋡𐋢𐋣𐋤𐋥𐋦𐋧𐋨𐋩𐋪𐋫𐋬𐋭𐋮𐋯𐋰𐋱𐋲𐋳𐋴𐋵𐋶𐋷𐋸𐋹𐋺𐋻𐋼𐋽𐋾𐋿𐌀𐌁𐌂𐌃𐌄𐌅𐌆𐌇𐌈𐌉𐌊𐌋𐌌𐌍𐌎𐌏𐌐𐌑𐌒𐌓𐌔𐌕𐌖𐌗𐌘𐌙𐌚𐌛𐌜𐌝𐌞𐌟𐌠𐌡𐌢𐌣𐌤𐌥𐌦𐌧𐌨𐌩𐌪𐌫𐌬𐌭𐌮𐌯𐌰𐌱𐌲𐌳𐌴𐌵𐌶𐌷𐌸𐌹𐌺𐌻𐌼𐌽𐌾𐌿𐍀𐍁𐍂𐍃𐍄𐍅𐍆𐍇𐍈𐍉𐍊𐍋𐍌𐍍𐍎𐍏𐍐𐍑𐍒𐍓𐍔𐍕𐍖𐍗𐍘𐍙𐍚𐍛𐍜𐍝𐍞𐍟𐍠𐍡𐍢𐍣𐍤𐍥𐍦𐍧𐍨𐍩𐍪𐍫𐍬𐍭𐍮𐍯𐍰𐍱𐍲𐍳𐍴𐍵𐍶𐍷𐍸𐍹𐍺𐍻𐍼𐍽𐍾𐍿𐎀𐎁𐎂𐎃𐎄𐎅𐎆𐎇𐎈𐎉𐎊𐎋𐎌𐎍𐎎𐎏𐎐𐎑𐎒𐎓𐎔𐎕𐎖𐎗𐎘𐎙𐎚𐎛𐎜𐎝𐎞𐎟𐎠𐎡𐎢𐎣𐎤𐎥𐎦𐎧𐎨𐎩𐎪𐎫𐎬𐎭𐎮𐎯𐎰𐎱𐎲𐎳𐎴𐎵𐎶𐎷𐎸𐎹𐎺𐎻𐎼𐎽𐎾𐎿𐏀𐏁𐏂𐏃𐏄𐏅𐏆𐏇𐏈𐏉𐏊𐏋𐏌𐏍𐏎𐏏𐏐𐏑𐏒𐏓𐏔𐏕𐏖𐏗𐏘𐏙𐏚𐏛𐏜𐏝𐏞𐏟𐏠𐏡𐏢𐏣𐏤𐏥𐏦𐏧𐏨𐏩𐏪𐏫𐏬𐏭𐏮𐏯𐏰𐏱𐏲𐏳𐏴𐏵𐏶𐏷𐏸𐏹𐏺𐏻𐏼𐏽𐏾𐏿𐐀𐐁𐐂𐐃𐐄𐐅𐐆𐐇𐐈𐐉𐐊𐐋𐐌𐐍𐐎𐐏𐐐𐐑𐐒𐐓𐐔𐐕𐐖𐐗𐐘𐐙𐐚𐐛𐐜𐐝𐐞𐐟𐐠𐐡𐐢𐐣𐐤𐐥𐐦𐐧𐐨𐐩𐐪𐐫𐐬𐐭𐐮𐐯𐐰𐐱𐐲𐐳𐐴𐐵𐐶𐐷𐐸𐐹𐐺𐐻𐐼𐐽𐐾𐐿𐑀𐑁𐑂𐑃𐑄𐑅𐑆𐑇𐑈𐑉𐑊𐑋𐑌𐑍𐑎𐑏𐑐𐑑𐑒𐑓𐑔𐑕𐑖𐑗𐑘𐑙𐑚𐑛𐑜𐑝𐑞𐑟𐑠𐑡𐑢𐑣𐑤𐑥𐑦𐑧𐑨𐑩𐑪𐑫𐑬𐑭𐑮𐑯𐑰𐑱𐑲𐑳𐑴𐑵𐑶𐑷𐑸𐑹𐑺𐑻𐑼𐑽𐑾𐑿𐒀𐒁𐒂𐒃𐒄𐒅𐒆𐒇𐒈𐒉𐒊𐒋𐒌𐒍𐒎𐒏𐒐𐒑𐒒𐒓𐒔𐒕𐒖𐒗𐒘𐒙𐒚𐒛𐒜𐒝𐒞𐒟𐒠𐒡𐒢𐒣𐒤𐒥𐒦𐒧𐒨𐒩𐒪𐒫𐒬𐒭𐒮𐒯𐒰𐒱𐒲𐒳𐒴𐒵𐒶𐒷𐒸𐒹𐒺𐒻𐒼𐒽𐒾𐒿𐓀𐓁𐓂𐓃𐓄𐓅𐓆𐓇𐓈𐓉𐓊𐓋𐓌𐓍𐓎𐓏𐓐𐓑𐓒𐓓𐓔𐓕𐓖𐓗𐓘𐓙𐓚𐓛𐓜𐓝𐓞𐓟𐓠𐓡𐓢𐓣𐓤𐓥𐓦𐓧𐓨𐓩𐓪𐓫𐓬𐓭𐓮𐓯𐓰𐓱𐓲𐓳𐓴𐓵𐓶𐓷𐓸𐓹𐓺𐓻𐓼𐓽𐓾𐓿𐔀𐔁𐔂𐔃𐔄𐔅𐔆𐔇𐔈𐔉𐔊𐔋𐔌𐔍𐔎𐔏𐔐𐔑𐔒𐔓𐔔𐔕𐔖𐔗𐔘𐔙𐔚𐔛𐔜𐔝𐔞𐔟𐔠𐔡𐔢𐔣𐔤𐔥𐔦𐔧𐔨𐔩𐔪𐔫𐔬𐔭𐔮𐔯𐔰𐔱𐔲𐔳𐔴𐔵𐔶𐔷𐔸𐔹𐔺𐔻𐔼𐔽𐔾𐔿𐕀𐕁𐕂𐕃𐕄𐕅𐕆𐕇𐕈𐕉𐕊𐕋𐕌𐕍𐕎𐕏𐕐𐕑𐕒𐕓𐕔𐕕𐕖𐕗𐕘𐕙𐕚𐕛𐕜𐕝𐕞𐕟𐕠𐕡𐕢𐕣𐕤𐕥𐕦𐕧𐕨𐕩𐕪𐕫𐕬𐕭𐕮𐕯𐕰𐕱𐕲𐕳𐕴𐕵𐕶𐕷𐕸𐕹𐕺𐕻𐕼𐕽𐕾𐕿𐖀𐖁𐖂𐖃𐖄𐖅𐖆𐖇𐖈𐖉𐖊𐖋𐖌𐖍𐖎𐖏𐖐𐖑𐖒𐖓𐖔𐖕𐖖𐖗𐖘𐖙𐖚𐖛𐖜𐖝𐖞𐖟𐖠𐖡𐖢𐖣𐖤𐖥𐖦𐖧𐖨𐖩𐖪𐖫𐖬𐖭𐖮𐖯𐖰𐖱𐖲𐖳𐖴𐖵𐖶𐖷𐖸𐖹𐖺𐖻𐖼𐖽𐖾𐖿𐗀𐗁𐗂𐗃𐗄𐗅𐗆𐗇𐗈𐗉𐗊𐗋𐗌𐗍𐗎𐗏𐗐𐗑𐗒𐗓𐗔𐗕𐗖𐗗𐗘𐗙𐗚𐗛𐗜𐗝𐗞𐗟𐗠𐗡𐗢𐗣𐗤𐗥𐗦𐗧𐗨𐗩𐗪𐗫𐗬𐗭𐗮𐗯𐗰𐗱𐗲𐗳𐗴𐗵𐗶𐗷𐗸𐗹𐗺𐗻𐗼𐗽𐗾𐗿𐘀𐘁𐘂𐘃𐘄𐘅𐘆𐘇𐘈𐘉𐘊𐘋𐘌𐘍𐘎𐘏𐘐𐘑𐘒𐘓𐘔𐘕𐘖𐘗𐘘𐘙𐘚𐘛𐘜𐘝𐘞𐘟𐘠𐘡𐘢𐘣𐘤𐘥𐘦𐘧𐘨𐘩𐘪𐘫𐘬𐘭𐘮𐘯𐘰𐘱𐘲𐘳𐘴𐘵𐘶𐘷𐘸𐘹𐘺𐘻𐘼𐘽𐘾𐘿𐙀𐙁𐙂𐙃𐙄𐙅𐙆𐙇𐙈𐙉𐙊𐙋𐙌𐙍𐙎𐙏𐙐𐙑𐙒𐙓𐙔𐙕𐙖𐙗𐙘𐙙𐙚𐙛𐙜𐙝𐙞𐙟𐙠𐙡𐙢𐙣𐙤𐙥𐙦𐙧𐙨𐙩𐙪𐙫𐙬𐙭𐙮𐙯𐙰𐙱𐙲𐙳𐙴𐙵𐙶𐙷𐙸𐙹𐙺𐙻𐙼𐙽𐙾𐙿𐚀𐚁𐚂𐚃𐚄𐚅𐚆𐚇𐚈𐚉𐚊𐚋𐚌𐚍𐚎𐚏𐚐𐚑𐚒𐚓𐚔𐚕𐚖𐚗𐚘𐚙𐚚𐚛𐚜𐚝𐚞𐚟𐚠𐚡𐚢𐚣𐚤𐚥𐚦𐚧𐚨𐚩𐚪𐚫𐚬𐚭𐚮𐚯𐚰𐚱𐚲𐚳𐚴𐚵𐚶𐚷𐚸𐚹𐚺𐚻𐚼𐚽𐚾𐚿𐛀𐛁𐛂𐛃𐛄𐛅𐛆𐛇𐛈𐛉𐛊𐛋𐛌𐛍𐛎𐛏𐛐𐛑𐛒𐛓𐛔𐛕𐛖𐛗𐛘𐛙𐛚𐛛𐛜𐛝𐛞𐛟𐛠𐛡𐛢𐛣𐛤𐛥𐛦𐛧𐛨𐛩𐛪𐛫𐛬𐛭𐛮𐛯𐛰𐛱𐛲𐛳𐛴𐛵𐛶𐛷𐛸𐛹𐛺𐛻𐛼𐛽𐛾𐛿𐜀𐜁𐜂𐜃𐜄𐜅𐜆𐜇𐜈𐜉𐜊𐜋𐜌𐜍𐜎𐜏𐜐𐜑𐜒𐜓𐜔𐜕𐜖𐜗𐜘𐜙𐜚𐜛𐜜𐜝𐜞𐜟𐜠𐜡𐜢𐜣𐜤𐜥𐜦𐜧𐜨𐜩𐜪𐜫𐜬𐜭𐜮𐜯𐜰𐜱𐜲𐜳𐜴𐜵𐜶𐜷𐜸𐜹𐜺𐜻𐜼𐜽𐜾𐜿𐝀𐝁𐝂𐝃𐝄𐝅𐝆𐝇𐝈𐝉𐝊𐝋𐝌𐝍𐝎𐝏𐝐𐝑𐝒𐝓𐝔𐝕𐝖𐝗𐝘𐝙𐝚𐝛𐝜𐝝𐝞𐝟𐝠𐝡𐝢𐝣𐝤𐝥𐝦𐝧𐝨𐝩𐝪𐝫𐝬𐝭𐝮𐝯𐝰𐝱𐝲𐝳𐝴𐝵𐝶𐝷𐝸𐝹𐝺𐝻𐝼𐝽𐝾𐝿𐞀𐞁𐞂𐞃𐞄𐞅𐞆𐞇𐞈𐞉𐞊𐞋𐞌𐞍𐞎𐞏𐞐𐞑𐞒𐞓𐞔𐞕𐞖𐞗𐞘𐞙𐞚𐞛𐞜𐞝𐞞𐞟𐞠𐞡𐞢𐞣𐞤𐞥𐞦𐞧𐞨𐞩𐞪𐞫𐞬𐞭𐞮𐞯𐞰𐞱𐞲𐞳𐞴𐞵𐞶𐞷𐞸𐞹𐞺𐞻𐞼𐞽𐞾𐞿𐟀𐟁𐟂𐟃𐟄𐟅𐟆𐟇𐟈𐟉𐟊𐟋𐟌𐟍𐟎𐟏𐟐𐟑𐟒𐟓𐟔𐟕𐟖𐟗𐟘𐟙𐟚𐟛𐟜𐟝𐟞𐟟𐟠𐟡𐟢𐟣𐟤𐟥𐟦𐟧𐟨𐟩𐟪𐟫𐟬𐟭𐟮𐟯𐟰𐟱𐟲𐟳𐟴𐟵𐟶𐟷𐟸𐟹𐟺𐟻𐟼𐟽𐟾𐟿𐠀𐠁𐠂𐠃𐠄𐠅𐠆𐠇𐠈𐠉𐠊𐠋𐠌𐠍𐠎𐠏𐠐𐠑𐠒𐠓𐠔𐠕𐠖𐠗𐠘𐠙𐠚𐠛𐠜𐠝𐠞𐠟𐠠𐠡𐠢𐠣𐠤𐠥𐠦𐠧𐠨𐠩𐠪𐠫𐠬𐠭𐠮𐠯𐠰𐠱𐠲𐠳𐠴𐠵𐠶𐠷𐠸𐠹𐠺𐠻𐠼𐠽𐠾𐠿𐡀𐡁𐡂𐡃𐡄𐡅𐡆𐡇𐡈𐡉𐡊𐡋𐡌𐡍𐡎𐡏𐡐𐡑𐡒𐡓𐡔𐡕𐡖𐡗𐡘𐡙𐡚𐡛𐡜𐡝𐡞𐡟𐡠𐡡𐡢𐡣𐡤𐡥𐡦𐡧𐡨𐡩𐡪𐡫𐡬𐡭𐡮𐡯𐡰𐡱𐡲𐡳𐡴𐡵𐡶𐡷𐡸𐡹𐡺𐡻𐡼𐡽𐡾𐡿𐢀𐢁𐢂𐢃𐢄𐢅𐢆𐢇𐢈𐢉𐢊𐢋𐢌𐢍𐢎𐢏𐢐𐢑𐢒𐢓𐢔𐢕𐢖𐢗𐢘𐢙𐢚𐢛𐢜𐢝𐢞𐢟𐢠𐢡𐢢𐢣𐢤𐢥𐢦𐢧𐢨𐢩𐢪𐢫𐢬𐢭𐢮𐢯𐢰𐢱𐢲𐢳𐢴𐢵𐢶𐢷𐢸𐢹𐢺𐢻𐢼𐢽𐢾𐢿𐣀𐣁𐣂𐣃𐣄𐣅𐣆𐣇𐣈𐣉𐣊𐣋𐣌𐣍𐣎𐣏𐣐𐣑𐣒𐣓𐣔𐣕𐣖𐣗𐣘𐣙𐣚𐣛𐣜𐣝𐣞𐣟𐣠𐣡𐣢𐣣𐣤𐣥𐣦𐣧𐣨𐣩𐣪𐣫𐣬𐣭𐣮𐣯𐣰𐣱𐣲𐣳𐣴𐣵𐣶𐣷𐣸𐣹𐣺𐣻𐣼𐣽𐣾𐣿𐤀𐤁𐤂𐤃𐤄𐤅𐤆𐤇𐤈𐤉𐤊𐤋𐤌𐤍𐤎𐤏𐤐𐤑𐤒𐤓𐤔𐤕𐤖𐤗𐤘𐤙𐤚𐤛𐤜𐤝𐤞𐤟𐤠𐤡𐤢𐤣𐤤𐤥𐤦𐤧𐤨𐤩𐤪𐤫𐤬𐤭𐤮𐤯𐤰𐤱𐤲𐤳𐤴𐤵𐤶𐤷𐤸𐤹𐤺𐤻𐤼𐤽𐤾𐤿𐥀𐥁𐥂𐥃𐥄𐥅𐥆𐥇𐥈𐥉𐥊𐥋𐥌𐥍𐥎𐥏𐥐𐥑𐥒𐥓𐥔𐥕𐥖𐥗𐥘𐥙𐥚𐥛𐥜𐥝𐥞𐥟𐥠𐥡𐥢𐥣𐥤𐥥𐥦𐥧𐥨𐥩𐥪𐥫𐥬𐥭𐥮𐥯𐥰𐥱𐥲𐥳𐥴𐥵𐥶𐥷𐥸𐥹𐥺𐥻𐥼𐥽𐥾𐥿𐦀𐦁𐦂𐦃𐦄𐦅𐦆𐦇𐦈𐦉𐦊𐦋𐦌𐦍𐦎𐦏𐦐𐦑𐦒𐦓𐦔𐦕𐦖𐦗𐦘𐦙𐦚𐦛𐦜𐦝𐦞𐦟𐦠𐦡𐦢𐦣𐦤𐦥𐦦𐦧𐦨𐦩𐦪𐦫𐦬𐦭𐦮𐦯𐦰𐦱𐦲𐦳𐦴𐦵𐦶𐦷𐦸𐦹𐦺𐦻𐦼𐦽𐦾𐦿𐧀𐧁𐧂𐧃𐧄𐧅𐧆𐧇𐧈𐧉𐧊𐧋𐧌𐧍𐧎𐧏𐧐𐧑𐧒𐧓𐧔𐧕𐧖𐧗𐧘𐧙𐧚𐧛𐧜𐧝𐧞𐧟𐧠𐧡𐧢𐧣𐧤𐧥𐧦𐧧𐧨𐧩𐧪𐧫𐧬𐧭𐧮𐧯𐧰𐧱𐧲𐧳𐧴𐧵𐧶𐧷𐧸𐧹𐧺𐧻𐧼𐧽𐧾𐧿𐨀𐨁𐨂𐨃𐨄𐨅𐨆𐨇𐨈𐨉𐨊𐨋𐨌𐨍𐨎𐨏𐨐𐨑𐨒𐨓𐨔𐨕𐨖𐨗𐨘𐨙𐨚𐨛𐨜𐨝𐨞𐨟𐨠𐨡𐨢𐨣𐨤𐨥𐨦𐨧𐨨𐨩𐨪𐨫𐨬𐨭𐨮𐨯𐨰𐨱𐨲𐨳𐨴𐨵𐨶𐨷𐨹𐨺𐨸𐨻𐨼𐨽𐨾𐨿𐩀𐩁𐩂𐩃𐩄𐩅𐩆𐩇𐩈𐩉𐩊𐩋𐩌𐩍𐩎𐩏𐩐𐩑𐩒𐩓𐩔𐩕𐩖𐩗𐩘𐩙𐩚𐩛𐩜𐩝𐩞𐩟𐩠𐩡𐩢𐩣𐩤𐩥𐩦𐩧𐩨𐩩𐩪𐩫𐩬𐩭𐩮𐩯𐩰𐩱𐩲𐩳𐩴𐩵𐩶𐩷𐩸𐩹𐩺𐩻𐩼𐩽𐩾𐩿𐪀𐪁𐪂𐪃𐪄𐪅𐪆𐪇𐪈𐪉𐪊𐪋𐪌𐪍𐪎𐪏𐪐𐪑𐪒𐪓𐪔𐪕𐪖𐪗𐪘𐪙𐪚𐪛𐪜𐪝𐪞𐪟𐪠𐪡𐪢𐪣𐪤𐪥𐪦𐪧𐪨𐪩𐪪𐪫𐪬𐪭𐪮𐪯𐪰𐪱𐪲𐪳𐪴𐪵𐪶𐪷𐪸𐪹𐪺𐪻𐪼𐪽𐪾𐪿𐫀𐫁𐫂𐫃𐫄𐫅𐫆𐫇𐫈𐫉𐫊𐫋𐫌𐫍𐫎𐫏𐫐𐫑𐫒𐫓𐫔𐫕𐫖𐫗𐫘𐫙𐫚𐫛𐫜𐫝𐫞𐫟𐫠𐫡𐫢𐫣𐫤𐫦𐫥𐫧𐫨𐫩𐫪𐫫𐫬𐫭𐫮𐫯𐫰𐫱𐫲𐫳𐫴𐫵𐫶𐫷𐫸𐫹𐫺𐫻𐫼𐫽𐫾𐫿𐬀𐬁𐬂𐬃𐬄𐬅𐬆𐬇𐬈𐬉𐬊𐬋𐬌𐬍𐬎𐬏𐬐𐬑𐬒𐬓𐬔𐬕𐬖𐬗𐬘𐬙𐬚𐬛𐬜𐬝𐬞𐬟𐬠𐬡𐬢𐬣𐬤𐬥𐬦𐬧𐬨𐬩𐬪𐬫𐬬𐬭𐬮𐬯𐬰𐬱𐬲𐬳𐬴𐬵𐬶𐬷𐬸𐬹𐬺𐬻𐬼𐬽𐬾𐬿𐭀𐭁𐭂𐭃𐭄𐭅𐭆𐭇𐭈𐭉𐭊𐭋𐭌𐭍𐭎𐭏𐭐𐭑𐭒𐭓𐭔𐭕𐭖𐭗𐭘𐭙𐭚𐭛𐭜𐭝𐭞𐭟𐭠𐭡𐭢𐭣𐭤𐭥𐭦𐭧𐭨𐭩𐭪𐭫𐭬𐭭𐭮𐭯𐭰𐭱𐭲𐭳𐭴𐭵𐭶𐭷𐭸𐭹𐭺𐭻𐭼𐭽𐭾𐭿𐮀𐮁𐮂𐮃𐮄𐮅𐮆𐮇𐮈𐮉𐮊𐮋𐮌𐮍𐮎𐮏𐮐𐮑𐮒𐮓𐮔𐮕𐮖𐮗𐮘𐮙𐮚𐮛𐮜𐮝𐮞𐮟𐮠𐮡𐮢𐮣𐮤𐮥𐮦𐮧𐮨𐮩𐮪𐮫𐮬𐮭𐮮𐮯𐮰𐮱𐮲𐮳𐮴𐮵𐮶𐮷𐮸𐮹𐮺𐮻𐮼𐮽𐮾𐮿𐯀𐯁𐯂𐯃𐯄𐯅𐯆𐯇𐯈𐯉𐯊𐯋𐯌𐯍𐯎𐯏𐯐𐯑𐯒𐯓𐯔𐯕𐯖𐯗𐯘𐯙𐯚𐯛𐯜𐯝𐯞𐯟𐯠𐯡𐯢𐯣𐯤𐯥𐯦𐯧𐯨𐯩𐯪𐯫𐯬𐯭𐯮𐯯𐯰𐯱𐯲𐯳𐯴𐯵𐯶𐯷𐯸𐯹𐯺𐯻𐯼𐯽𐯾𐯿𐰀𐰁𐰂𐰃𐰄𐰅𐰆𐰇𐰈𐰉𐰊𐰋𐰌𐰍𐰎𐰏𐰐𐰑𐰒𐰓𐰔𐰕𐰖𐰗𐰘𐰙𐰚𐰛𐰜𐰝𐰞𐰟𐰠𐰡𐰢𐰣𐰤𐰥𐰦𐰧𐰨𐰩𐰪𐰫𐰬𐰭𐰮𐰯𐰰𐰱𐰲𐰳𐰴𐰵𐰶𐰷𐰸𐰹𐰺𐰻𐰼𐰽𐰾𐰿𐱀𐱁𐱂𐱃𐱄𐱅𐱆𐱇𐱈𐱉𐱊𐱋𐱌𐱍𐱎𐱏𐱐𐱑𐱒𐱓𐱔𐱕𐱖𐱗𐱘𐱙𐱚𐱛𐱜𐱝𐱞𐱟𐱠𐱡𐱢𐱣𐱤𐱥𐱦𐱧𐱨𐱩𐱪𐱫𐱬𐱭𐱮𐱯𐱰𐱱𐱲𐱳𐱴𐱵𐱶𐱷𐱸𐱹𐱺𐱻𐱼𐱽𐱾𐱿𐲀𐲁𐲂𐲃𐲄𐲅𐲆𐲇𐲈𐲉𐲊𐲋𐲌𐲍𐲎𐲏𐲐𐲑𐲒𐲓𐲔𐲕𐲖𐲗𐲘𐲙𐲚𐲛𐲜𐲝𐲞𐲟𐲠𐲡𐲢𐲣𐲤𐲥𐲦𐲧𐲨



<FoolishG> got it

Fifteen minutes later, Quackity slammed the translation manual shut and rose to his feet. “*Dream*, ” he snarled, then spun on his heel and hurled what Dream had *claimed* to be a copy of the revival book into his fireplace. Clearly, the man hadn’t learned his lesson. Looks like he’d have to--

His planning was interrupted when the prison alarms went off.

174. remix, pt. 12 ( [see previous parts of this loop here](#) )

### ***TW: Mentions of Abuse/Gaslighting***

“What do you mean he’s *gone*?”

Both Quackity and Fundy tensed, but Tubbo remained unmoved in the face of Technoblade’s anger. “I told you. Tommy was here. He took him.”

Technoblade *growled*. “You’re tellin’ me that your vice president blew up my house, grabbed Dream, and waltzed away from Spawn while you just *watched*?”

Fundy bristled beneath Technoblade’s glare, his ears pressed flat to his head. “Yes, but I’m telling you--”

“You’re tellin’ me that they let Tommy *take him*.” The grass crunched beneath Technoblade’s boots as he took a step forward. “Doesn’t matter if they were actin’ *friendly* or *not*.”

“Something’s *wrong*,” Fundy insisted. “Dream didn’t-- Dream didn’t sound scared at all! He didn’t fight when Tommy grabbed him--”

“Dream was crushed to death,” Philza pointed out. “That usually means minor paralysis for a few minutes after respawn.”

--but then why were they acting so-- *nice* to each other? Tommy *killed* Dream! Dream was terrified of Tommy! They’re *enemies*, but they-- they acted like they were *friends*.”

Philza snorted. Fundy flinched back at the acerbic noise. “What, you think they were working together? Mate, even if they orchestrated this entire mess-- *why would they*?”

Fundy stared at his grandfather, unable to answer. Because really, *why* would Dream and Tommy pretend to be archnemeses, cook up an elaborate storyline, and drag both the Antarctic commune and the L’Manberg Cabinet into it? As it stood, Tommy would be losing his friends, his position, his *nation* - things he clearly treasured, because Fundy had seen him *die* for them. On top of that, Dream had been in terrible shape when he’d tried to fight the Butcher Army. Yes, injuries could be faked - but malnutrition *couldn’t*. Would the two of them really go so far for a plot that accomplished nothing?

“Manipulation,” Tubbo said.

Heads turned towards Tubbo, who kept his gaze firmly on the ground. “What?” Philza said.

“Manipulation,” Tubbo repeated. “Gaslighting. It’s-- some abus-- ab-- some *people* force other people to be dependent on them for a-- for a long time. A-and when that happens, the-- the *victims* might begin thinking they’re friends.”

“Dream doesn’t think he’s friends with Tommy,” Technoblade pointed out.

“He *told* you he doesn’t think he’s friends with Tommy,” Tubbo corrected. “How he actually feels might be a different story, and. . . and when he’s *with* Tommy--”

“He met Tommy in L’Manberg. He had no trouble fighting him.”

“He had a weapon in L’Manberg and both you and Phil at his back. He was paralyzed and alone when he respawned.” Tubbo curled his fingers in the hem of his shirt. “He couldn’t do anything to stop Tommy, so he-- so he fell back into that. . . mindset.”

“Or he was just playing along,” Philza muttered. “To keep Tommy from hurting him.”

“This is ridiculous,” Quackity interrupted, unable to contain his incredulity. “Look, I know Tommy’s changed, but he wouldn’t-- he isn’t like that!”

“I don’t want to believe it,” Tubbo whispered, “but how else would you explain what Fundy saw? How else would you explain what happened on the execution platform?”

Quackity opened his mouth. Closed it. His shoulders slumped. “*Fuck.*”

“No, no,” Fundy snapped. “You don’t get it-- Dream wasn’t scared *at all*. They acted like *brothers*, not like-- I don’t know, a manipulative relationship--”

“Tommy and Wilbur acted like brothers too.”

Silence descended upon the Spawn clearing. Philza had gone bone-white. “Wh-what?” he stammered, taking a step back. “You. . . what do you mean, *too*?”

“Wh-when Tommy and Wilbur were exiled, Wilbur. . . he-- he kinda went bad in the head.” Tubbo stared at his shoes. “He, uh, he’d hurt Tommy. Sometimes. Th-there were bruises. And, uh, Tommy told me he’d have these moments when he was convinced Tommy was traitor, and then it’d get *really* bad then ‘cause Tommy would get locked up in this tiny room and Wil told him it was for his own good and I didn’t do anything because *I didn’t know*--”

“Woah woah woah--” Quackity stepped in, pressing his hands down on Tubbo’s shoulders. “Tubbo. Tubbo, look at me. See me? Can you breathe with me?”

Tubbo staggered back, knocking Quackity’s arms away. “I didn’t *know*,” he choked out. “I thought Tommy was okay but he was *hurting* but he didn’t tell me until Wilbur was *dead*--”

“Wilbur didn’t hurt Tommy,” Technoblade interrupted. “I was *there*, Tubbo. I would have noticed.”

But Tubbo was already shaking his head. “You weren’t looking hard enough,” he whispered. “He was good at faking.”

Technoblade’s eyes narrowed. He rifled through his memories, recalling the sound of Tommy’s boisterous shouts echoing off the walls of Pogtopia, his bright smile--

--the way he’d lean into Wilbur when the man placed a possessive hand on his shoulder, the bruises on his arms and face that Technoblade thought had come from the walls of the ravine, how thin and *pale* he looked when he *wasn’t* shouting or smiling--

“He wouldn’t,” Philza said. “Wilbur *wouldn’t do that.*”

Tubbo hunched in on himself. “I thought Tommy wouldn’t either.”

“I know Wilbur! I’m his *father!*”

“And I’m Tommy’s *best friend*. Or I was.” Tubbo giggled, humorless and just a touch hysterical. “Dunno if he feels the same anymore.”

Philza turned to Technoblade, wings flaring with desperate hope, and Technoblade wished more than anything that he could confirm Phil’s beliefs. But Tubbo’s words had thrown his memories in a whole new light, and in retrospect, Technoblade should have caught on to what was happening.

*Self blame later*, he told himself, meeting Phil’s gaze. Whatever his friend saw in his eyes was answer enough.

“N-no,” the avian stammered, recoiling. “He-- he *wouldn’t--*”

“I’m sorry, Phil,” Technoblade said. “I failed him.”

Philza seemed to go impossibly *paler*. His hands flexed around empty air, as though he was trying to grasp something that wasn’t there. His damaged wings curled around him in a futile attempt to shield himself from the truth. Fundy, too, had folded in on himself, wide-eyed and trembling beneath the weight of the new revelations. Quackity was still doing his best to ground him and Tubbo, but even he appeared shaken.

“Wh-what then?” he asked roughly. “What the *fuck* do we do?”

“Gettin’ Dream away from Tommy sounds like a good startin’ point,” Technoblade deadpanned. The fury burning hot in his chest had been tempered by the guilt of failing Tommy in Pogtopia, but it hadn’t been extinguished. “Maybe takin’ Tommy down while we’re at it--”

“We’re *not* killing him!”

The occupants of the clearing flinched in surprise, turning to Fundy. The fox hybrid bristled, refusing to back down even under the combined weight of their stares.

“Look, even if Dream was-- was manipulated into this or something, it’s-- killing Tommy isn’t going to fix anything. He needs help.”

“Assumin’ he *can* be helped,” Technoblade muttered. He raised a hand to forestall any protest. “I know, I wasn’t talkin’ about killing him anyway. But-- look, Phil and I are goin’ in for Dream, and Dream only. We’re not gonna go after Tommy, but if he gets in our way, that’s his problem.”

Tubbo shifted, visibly collecting himself. Technoblade felt a grudging respect as he watched the President facade fall back into place - the calm, collected leader who didn’t bend under pressure.

“That’s. . . reasonable. Truce?” he asked, holding out one hand. Technoblade clasped it in a grudging handshake.

“Truce,” the piglin hybrid agreed. “Just until we get Dream back.”

Tubbo released a shaky breath and let go. “Okay. Okay,” he muttered, clasping his hands behind his back. “First things first, we have to track him down.” His voice cracked on the fifth syllable, but he powered through. “Find where he took Dream, get him out, and. . . and detain Tommy.”

Neither Fundy nor Quackity protested this decision. Tubbo turned to Technoblade, something *resigned* in the set of his shoulders. “Leave Tommy to us. Just don’t-- don’t hurt him.”

“I make no promises,” Technoblade rumbled. He stuck two fingers in his mouth and whistled, a single, piercing note that split the air. The L’Manbergians startled as two wolves slunk from the shadows, their pale fur gleaming in the sunlight.

Technoblade knelt in front of the hounds, withdrawing a netherite pauldron from his inventory. He held it out to the animals, waiting patiently as they sniffed it. The first wolf barked and backed away. The second wolf trotted to the edge of the clearing, nosing the foliage. Both paced several times before slipping into the bushes. Technoblade strode after them, only to stop about a foot from the clearing’s edge and glance back at the others.

“Well? The hounds say they went this way. You comin’ or not?”

**175.** *(for the previous part of this loop, see 165. in Chapter 33)*

“What are *you* doing here?”

Tommy refused to falter in the face of hostility, forcing himself to remain relaxed as he lounged on Jack’s couch. “*Guess why, bitch.*”

Jack snorted. “So you’ve come back to haunt me. Figures.”

*"I'm not here to haunt you," Tommy said. "I just want to know why you killed me."*

There was a beat of silence. Then Jack scoffed. "Right, ghost. You forgot, didn't you?"

Tommy frowned. *". . . No? I have all of my memories--"*

"If you did, you wouldn't be asking." Jack turned away, clearly dismissing him. "Now get out of my house, I have shit to do."

Tommy obviously couldn't let that stand. He got to his feet and hurried after Jack, trailing him further into the house. *"Now wait a minute, you--"*

"Get lost," Jack interrupted. He quickened his pace, near-jogging down the hall. They reached a closed door at the end. Jack moved to open it.

*"Jack, I just-- I just want to know why you did it! I thought we were friends!"*

Jack stopped in his tracks, one hand on the doorknob. Slowly, he turned around. "You. . . thought we were *friends*?"

There was suddenly something profoundly *unsettling* about his posture. Tommy ignored the unease brewing in his chest, crossing his arms and assuming an expression of mulish confusion. *"Well, yeah. We were the Triple Ts, remember? You, me, Tubbo? And you were part of L'Manberg, once! I thought-- I didn't think you'd, I dunno, kill me."*

"Huh. Funny. I thought you wouldn't kill me either." Jack smiled, all teeth. "Then you shoved me into lava when I went to visit you in Exile. I burned to death. Wasn't a fun way to go."

He paused, clearly waiting for a response. Tommy could only stare at him, stunned into silence.

Jack cackled, saw-edged and sharp with fury. "You don't even remember, do you?"

Tommy tried to speak, but his tongue had turned to lead in his mouth. His first instinct was to deny the accusation, but the jagged *rage* carved into every line of Jack's posture spoke of nothing but truth. He-- he *didn't* remember. The first few weeks of exile had blurred into a haze of rage and betrayal. There had been nightmares - so many nightmares - almost to the point where he couldn't distinguish between dreams and reality. His memories of killing Jack had likely been lost in the fog.

Jack sneered at his silence. "Yeah. Thought so. Then at the Green Festival, you had the *fucking audacity* to complain about how *nobody visited you in exile*." Something *otherworldly* burned beneath Jack's skin, contorting the air around him with a miasma of *loathing*. "Oh boo-hoo, poor little Tommy all alone in exile-- *if only* he hadn't *killed* the people who visited him!"

Tommy swallowed, tasting ash on his tongue. *". . . I . . . I didn't,"* he tried to protest, but it was a lie and they both knew it. Exile might have been a blur, but he remembered the events of the Green Festival in *excruciating* detail.

“I was in hell, you know,” Jack snarled. Sparks snapped between his teeth. “I *remember* being in hell. It was the worst fucking experience of my life, but you know what? *I dragged myself out*. I hated you *so fucking much* that my determination to *kill you* gave me the strength to *come back*. If you think we’re *friends*, you’re fucking deluded. Now get *out* of my house.”

Tommy didn’t move. Jack’s words cycled through his mind, tearing away at the bubble of denial he’d built. Here was undeniable proof that Jack *despised* him - and for good reason. If he’d really taken one of Jack’s lives when the man had been trying to help him--

“Jack, I’m-- I’m sorry.”

Jack’s ragged breathing hitched. He turned white, then red, then white again. When he spoke, his voice was trembling with barely-restrained fury.

“If this is some kind of *sick joke*-- ”

“*It’s not a joke, Jack! I’m sorry, I really am--*”

“You’re just apologizing now!” Jack snarled. “Just because I threw all that shit in your face--”

“**I DIDN’T KNOW!**” Tommy screamed, his echoing voice crackling with static. “Jack, I *swear* I didn’t--”

“HOW COULD YOU NOT KNOW THAT YOU KILLED SOMEONE?!”

“*Exile, it was--*” Tommy fumbled for words, unable to explain the *fog* he’d been in. “--*I couldn’t-- I was lost in my head, man, I didn’t--*”

Jack scoffed. “Right, so that makes it *okay*. ”

“*It doesn’t! Fuck-- I **know** it doesn’t, so stop putting words in my mouth! Jack, man, I fucked you over-- I admit that. I’m sorry. You didn’t-- you didn’t deserve any of that, and--*” Tommy took an unnecessary breath, trying to ground himself. “. . . *Fuck. I guess-- I’m just tryin’ to say I’m sorry. I know it’s not enough, but-- I am. You don’t have to accept my apology or shit, I’m just-- **fuck**, Jack, I’m so sorry. I’m sorry I killed you. I’m sorry I forgot. I’m sorry for betraying you, breaking your trust-- you didn’t deserve that.*”

Jack was silent. Tommy hesitantly lifted his gaze to his face, and was startled to see *tears* trickling down his cheeks.

“*Fuck*,” Jack hissed, pushing up his glasses to swipe at his eyes. “*Fuck*. I just-- I just wanted someone to acknowledge me, or at least-- at least *apologize* for what they did.”

“*I’m sorry*,” Tommy repeated. He knew it wasn’t enough, but he had to start somewhere. “*I’m so sorry, Jack. I-- what I did was wrong.*”

Jack snorted, low and watery. “No shit.”

They stood in that hallway, man and ghost, one trying furiously to scrub his tears away and the other hovering awkwardly at his shoulder. At long last, Jack sighed and looked up.

“Fuck,” he half-laughed, his shoulders slumping. “That’s all I ever wanted to hear from him. And now I get it from his fucking *ghost* instead. Because I killed him. *Fuck.*”

Tommy’s heart dropped into his stomach. “*I-- Jack, I **am** Tommy.*”

“You’re not. You’re some piss-poor replacement trapped here by ‘unfinished business’ or whatever.” Jack laughed. The sound rang hollow and flat. “Guess Tommy didn’t hate anyone enough to drag himself back to life.”

*Hate*, echoed Tommy’s mind. *Hate, hate, hate--*

“*I’m sorry,*” he tried one last time.

Jack shook. “I don’t need your apologies. He hurt me. I killed him. We’re even now, as far as it goes, and you can’t apologize when you’re not him.”

“*Jack--*”

Jack stepped into his room and shut the door in his face. Tommy stared at it in dazed silence for several long moments, then turned and drifted away.

## Chapter End Notes

this redemption arc is going great

anyways we got a lot of fanart in the month I was gone!!

This beautiful [fanart of child fundy being a troll](#) by Lu :D

Yukina drew some hilarious [remix fanart](#)!!

Astral, the fantastic artist who made that ot animatic, drew a LOT of wonderful art both for fun and for oktober!

[Tempus Karl Doodles](#) ~ [1: Glitter Duo](#) ~ [3: Favorite Loop](#) ~ [4: Glitter \(Cult\)](#) ~ [5: Potion Mishap](#) ~ [6: Cactus](#) ~ [7: Cosplay Competition](#) ~ [8: Pranks](#) ~ [9: Odd-Numbered Loop](#) ~ [10: Even-Numbered Loop](#) ~ [11: Nyan Chronicles](#) ~ [13: Free Day \(Tempus\)](#) ~ [Height Difference](#) ~ [22: Fundy Appreciation](#) ~ [31: Belle](#)

She also got a [yt channel](#)! Check that out :D

Aivoze also made a ton of gorgeous art for oktober! It’s all compiled on [this instagram account](#) - go support it and her [main acc](#) too!

We also got a new inspired fic - [an undertale multiverse timeloop](#)! Ik some of you are also in that fandom so if you’re interested go check that out!

## **Loop Notes**

**171.** Unbeknownst to Dream and Tommy, the invention of furbies was Dream’s fault. He’d been trying to make Sam a Stable Adult Figure for Fundy and Tubbo, so he’d set up an engineering apprenticeship for them. He failed to predict the catastrophe that

would result from Sam introducing the two to Artificial Intelligence.

**172.** When pressed for answers about how he became immortal for the rest of the loop, Tommy began using increasingly ridiculous answers - ranging from "I tripped" to "I uno reversed death. Of course it works! Haven't you tried it?"

\*(second answer courtesy of Birbo)

**173.** Yes, Dream memorized the entire Bee Movie script. Unfortunately, he couldn't demonstrate his extensive knowledge of All Known Laws of Aviation without making Quackity suspicious about how many pages he was using for a three-minute chant.



# Chapter 36

## Chapter Notes

hi how're we feeling about the end of season 1? I personally am in a constant state of  
AAAAA /pos

### Spotlighted Comments

**d1nodog\_80:** Rest assured author the long furby will haunt me and my sleep paralysis demon until the end of time

**rivkamar2001:** Dream: I know! We'll get the players with an interest in inventing things into the same room! I'm sure nothing will go wrong.

(Cue terrified screaming from the server, followed by horrifying giggles from the army of furry demons)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

176.

“Dream. Dream *what the fuck.*”

Dream peeled his face off the pillow with quite a bit of effort and turned his head so he could see Tommy. “Brrgh?”

“Dream,” Tommy repeated, looking rather frazzled around the edges. “What the fuck. Why the fuck. *What.*”

The other looper didn’t appear to be too distressed, so it probably wasn’t urgent. Dream buried his face in the pillow, then made a noise of affront when it was ripped away.

“*Dream*, wake up! This is serious!”

Dream groaned loudly but reluctantly sat up, leveling Tommy with a glare. Tommy crossed his arms and glared right back.

“You installed hoverboots into Sam Nook,” he accused.

Dream blinked. “. . . Those exist?”

“Yes, they-- *you invented them*, Dream, what the fuck--”

“I did?”

“According to Sam, *yes!*”

“ . . . Huh.”

“And on *top of that*,” Tommy continued, “You gave the fuckin’ killer robot the ability to *T-pose*. Now he’s following me like some fucking *bodyguard* or whatever and T-posing at everything he considers a threat!”

“Nook’s not a killer robot,” Dream protested blearily. Then the rest of Tommy’s words caught up to him. “Wait, I gave him *what?*”

Tommy pointed to the window, where Sam Nook loomed like a benevolent sleep paralysis demon. He was, indeed, T-posing - and given that Dream's bedroom was on the second floor, he was hovering a good distance off the ground. Dream squinted at him, then nodded slowly.

“Huh,” he said. “Okay then.”

“Okay then? *Okay then?! Dream, he’s following me around--*”

“He’s supposed to protect you, Sam designed him that way--”

“--which would be fine if he *stopped T-posing every five seconds!* What the *fuck* were you on when you coded that?!”

Dream frowned, digging through his memory. “Uh. . . I think I was experimenting with how much my body could take before I had a heart attack. So. I consumed enough sugar to stock a store for Halloween, then chugged a couple cups of coffee and a Monster I stole from Karl.” He shrugged. “Blacked out and woke up here. ‘M guessing I made the new programs and the hoverboots sometime around then.”

Tommy stared at him. “How are you not dead?”

“Spite and caffeine tolerance,” was the answer. “Now get out. I want to sleep.”

“But what about--”

“Ask him politely to stop. Out.”

“*Dream--*”

Dream pulled his blanket over his head and began snoring loudly.

**177.** (*credit to Nekuu!*)

“This isn’t creepy or stalkerish at all.”

“I think we’re long past stalking when it comes to worrying about morality,” Dream deadpanned. He sunk a little lower in his crouch and squinted through his spyglass.

Sapnap, Karl, and Quackity stood a little ways away, oblivious to their presence. Quackity had just said something that had Sapnap flushing red, the tips of his hair set aflame by his embarrassment. Karl doubled over, cackling. Sapnap's blush only grew darker. He punched both of them in the arm, but the gesture was offset by his smile.

Tommy wrinkled his nose. "Right. So why are we stalking them?"

Dream lowered his spyglass so he could grin at him. "Well you see, they didn't get together until after the Manberg Era. But what if we set them up *before* Schlatt gets here?"

"How exactly are we supposed to set them up?"

A *glint* appeared in Dream's eye. "I have a few ideas."

---

Tommy and Dream watched as Quackity picked up the vase of flowers they'd left by his front door. The duck hybrid scanned the area, a look of puzzlement on his face. When no secret admirers presented themselves, he shrugged and retreated into his house, taking the flowers with him.

"That's the third bouquet," Tommy whispered. He held up a hand for a high-five, which Dream returned. "Mission accomplished, boys."

"We'll have to tail them to see if they mention anything to each other. I'll take Sapnap, you take Quackity. We should be fine as long as we're following at least two of them."

"Aye aye, captain."

---

Dream waved at Tommy. Tommy, who was crouching on the roof opposite him, waved back. As one, they turned their attention to the trio walking down the path between the buildings.

"Someone left me flowers," Sapnap was saying. Dream perked up, then ducked down when Karl glanced up. When he was sure he hadn't been spotted, he crept back to the edge and peered down.

Quackity grinned. "Got a secret admirer?"

Sapnap grinned back. "Maybe. It wouldn't happen to be you, would it?"

"I would if I thought you liked flowers. Didn't peg you as much of a flower guy, though." Quackity rocked back on his heels. "You know, I got flowers too. Whole bunch of marigolds

and forget-me-nots.”

“I got marigolds too!” Karl exclaimed. “No forget-me-nots, though. I had gladiolus.”

“Gladi-whats?”

“The flowers with the long leaves? They look like they grow together on the same stem?”

Sapnap snapped his fingers and pointed at him. “I got those! And the forget-me-nots too!”

Karl frowned. “. . . So we all got flowers, just different combinations of the same three?”

“Maybe it’s a sign,” Quackity joked. “The gods are warning us about the apocalypse.”

“Through *flowers*?”

“I’ve heard stranger things on other servers,” Karl admitted. “. . . Do you think anyone else got flowers?”

Sapnap shrugged. “Probably. Or we just all have the same secret admirer.”

Quackity whistled. “Aiming for all three of us, eh? They’ve got guts.”

Karl’s answering laugh was lost to the wind as the three moved out of hearing range. Dream sighed and mentally marked their first scheme as a failure.

---

“Plan B,” Tommy said. He whapped the whiteboard with a stick, accidentally smudging some of the diagrams he’d drawn. “You take ‘em out for a group picnic with George, then leave for urgent business.”

“So. . . we’re bringing George into this?”

“Perifally.”

“Peripherally.”

“That’s what I said, bitch. He can participate. Once.”

“Uh-huh. I’ll talk to Gogy if you get the food.”

“. . . Are you asking me to cook?”

“Pay someone else to do it. You’ll give us all food poisoning.”

“That was *one time*!”

---

George squinted at him. "Let me get this straight," he said. "You. . . want to set up Sapnap with Karl and Quackity."

"Yup," Dream said.

George looked at Dream, then glanced past him and made a face. Dream turned. There was a window at his back, but there was nothing but blue sky through it. When he turned back around, George's strange expression had smoothed out.

"Right," he said. "Okay. I can help with that. What do you need?"

---

"This is really good," Quackity said through a mouthful of fried chicken. "Did you make this?"

"Yes," Dream lied, very carefully not looking at George's deadpan face so he wouldn't burst out laughing. "Uh, it was--"

His communicator buzzed with the alarm he'd set half an hour previous. He pulled it out, stared at it for a moment, then shot to his feet. "Fuck," he blurted, making a show of glancing frantically back towards the other picnickers. "Uh-- sorry, I-- George, we really gotta go, I forgot about the *thing* we talked about--"

Karl moved to get up. "Wait, your picnic basket-- the blanket--"

"It's mine," George interrupted. He stood, brushing bits of grass off his legs. "Just drop it off at my house when you're done."

"Gottagohavefun!" Dream grabbed George by the arm and dragged him away. Once they were safely concealed in the treeline, George yanked his arm out of Dream's grasp and turned to him with an unimpressed look.

"For the record," he said, "I still think that was a stupid idea."

"Psst, Dream!" Both Dream and George looked up to see Tommy perched on a leafy branch. The teenager gestured impatiently. "Get up here!"

George snorted, turning on his heel. "I'll leave you to it."

Dream watched as he marched off, then shrugged and clambered up the tree. He accepted the spyglass Tommy handed him and settled in for a long wait.

Twenty minutes ticked by with no visible sign of a developing relationship, at which point Sapnap checked his comm, frowned, then said something to the others. Karl and Quackity nodded, pushing themselves to their feet. They began packing up the picnic blanket.

“Well,” Dream said blandly. “Looks like that failed.”

Tommy compacted his spyglass with a huff of annoyance. “Are you serious? We put so much time into that picnic--”

“Technically, George and Sam did most of the work--”

“--and they don’t even have the fuckin’ decency to *finish all the food*. Unbelievable. The audacity--”

“Sam did most of the cooking. I don’t think either of us have the right--”

“Un. *Fucking*. Believable.”

---

“Plan C. We set up a blind date at McPuffy’s.”

“Isn’t that a bit. . . straightforward?”

“Listen, Dream, it’s been a *month*. Desperate times call for desperate measures.”

---

“Oh Prime,” Tommy said. “They’re actually idiots.”

They were hiding in the kitchen, peering through the crack between the swinging doors. Even though Karl and Sapnap were sitting side by side, they maintained a minimum five-inch distance between them at all times. Seeing as Karl was *notorious* for being a very touchy-feely person, this was not a good sign.

“He hugs *everyone*,” Tommy muttered. He glowered at the colorfully-dressed man. “But nooo, the *one loop* we try to set them up he’s suddenly social distancing and-- oh *come on!* His hand was right there! You were *so close* to brushing it!”

“Patience,” Dream chided. Tommy kicked him in the shin. Dream yelped, jerked away from the doors, tripped over a stray pot, and knocked over a stack of oil draining racks. The resulting commotion had all three restaurant patrons pausing and looking over towards the kitchen doors. Tommy hastily ducked down before they saw him through the tiny plexiglass windows. When ten seconds had passed and nothing happened, he huffed and relaxed.

“Fuck, Dream,” he grumbled. “Be a little louder, why don’t you?”

“I wouldn’t have tripped if you hadn’t kicked me--”

“Blaming *me*? Real mature of you, Dream, I thought you were the responsible adult--”

“--neither of us are responsible adults, you *know* that--”

“What are you doing back here?”

Dream and Tommy yelled, spinning around to face Puffy. The woman stood at the back entrance of the restaurant, head cocked and arms crossed.

“Puffy, I promise there’s a good explanation for this.”

Puffy raised an eyebrow when Dream failed to provide said explanation. “And that would be. . .?”

“ . . . Give me a second to think of one.”

Puffy sighed. “Right. Both of you, out, right now. Shoo. I don’t need you stalking my customers.”

“We’re not stalki--”

“Yes, yes you are. Now either clean up the mess you made with those racks, or get out.”

Meekly, Tommy and Dream got.

---

“WHY ARE THEY SO DUMB?!” Tommy wailed. Dream watched, both amused and disturbed, as he repeatedly banged his head against the wall. “THEY’RE JUST. SO. FUCKING. DENSE. WHY.”

Karl hovered next to him, tugging nervously at the sleeves of his oversized hoodie. “Uh. . . Tommy, maybe don’t--” he cringed as Tommy’s head connected with the wall again. “--you’re going to give yourself a concussion.”

Tommy stopped mid-facewall and spun around, grabbing him by the shoulders. Karl blinked, eyes wide with confusion.

“Tommy? What?”

Tommy began shaking imperceptibly.

“ . . . Tommy?”

Dream carefully sidled over and pried Tommy's hands away. "Hey, Tommy, let's. . . calm down a little bit."

Tommy twitched. "Hey, Karl," he hissed. "Did you know. . . that Quackity and Sapnap really like you?"

Karl frowned. "I mean. . . yeah? They're my friends."

Tommy nodded. "Yeah, but like. They like you enough to platonically marry you. Probably. You should go on a date with them."

Karl giggled nervously. "Uh. . . no? I don't think they, uh, feel that way?"

Tommy *stared* at him. Karl inched back, likely sensing the threat of bodily harm.

"Excuse us," Dream said with strained cheer, then trapped his fellow looper in a headlock and dragged him out of the room.

"I am going to murder them," Tommy said as soon as they were out of hearing range. "I'm *actually* going to smother them with their pillows."

"No murdering the people we're trying to matchmake."

"They deserve it for being *so fucking dense!* Are you telling me you *don't* want to stab them?"

". . . Maybe a little bit," Dream admitted. He glared when Tommy opened his mouth. "But no. No stabbing."

"You're no fun."

---

When Dream opened his door to find Sapnap lounging on his couch, he was sorely tempted to shut it and crash at Tommy's place for the day. They'd spent nearly two hours coming up with increasingly elaborate schemes to get the three idiots to *open their fucking eyes*, and he simply didn't have the braincells left to deal with Sapnap's particular brand of lovesick denseness.

"Hi, Dream," said Sapnap.

Fuck. He'd been noticed. Dream reluctantly stepped in, shutting the door behind him. "Why are you in my house?"

"Friend privileges," was Sapnap's blithe response.

"Friend privileges don't cover breaking and entering."



“Yes they do. And I didn’t *break* and enter-- you really think I’d do something so *uncultured*?” Sapnap placed a hand over his heart in mock-offense. Something metallic flashed with the motion, catching Dream’s notice.

“Wait.” He stepped forward, his half-built retort forgotten. “Wait wait wait. Give me your hand.”

Sapnap snorted. “Look, Dream, I’m flattered and all but--”

Dream rolled his eyes and snatched Sapnap’s wrist, swinging it up so his hand was in clear view. Two rings shone in the sunlight, their gold bands lying snug around Sapnap’s finger.

Dream stared down at them. Slowly, he looked up at Sapnap, who had begun sweating.

“Ahaha. . . surprise?”

“How long,” Dream said, sounding completely and utterly dead inside.

“Uh, well, you see--”

---

Dream inhaled. Exhaled. Inhaled again. Held his breath for a couple seconds, then exhaled when he no longer felt like reaching across the table *wringing Sapnap’s neck like a wet towel*.

“So,” he began in a perfectly even tone. “You’re engaged.”

Sapnap shrugged. “Yep.”

“You’ve *been* engaged.”

“Uh-huh.”

Dream’s eye began twitching. “. . . And *why* exactly didn’t you tell us?”

“Because your attempts to set us up were funny,” Sapnap said unrepentantly. “And also good excuses for dates.”

“I see.” Dream pushed his chair back and stood, summoning his axe. Sapnap suddenly seemed to realize the danger he was in, because he shrunk back into his chair and raised his hands.

“Hey-- we can talk about this--”

“Oh, there will be *no talking* here, Sapnap. Do you *know* what Tommy and I have been through in the past three months? *Do you?*”

“Dream--”

Dream adjusted his grip on his axe. “You have a ten-second head start.”

Wisely, Sapnap decided to run for his life.

**178.**

“Dream. I have made a *terrible* mistake.”

“Given your daily life experiences, you’re going to have to be more specific.” At the withering glare he received, Dream sighed. “Okay, what did you do this time?”

“You know the glock? The one I got from the woodland mansion?”

Dream could feel a headache growing behind his temples. “Yes. . .?”

Tommy shuffled his feet. “. . . And you know how when Tubbo finds something new, he likes taking it apart so he can build it on his own?”

“Oh,” said Dream. “Oh, no.”

“Yep.”

“Should we be packing?”

“I mean. . . the chamber was empty, so maybe he won’t figure out bullets?”

Dream stared at Tommy, which was essentially his way of asking if Tommy was an idiot. Tommy considered the numerous times Tubbo had demonstrated his great (and often misused) intellect and admitted defeat.

“. . . Okay, yeah, let’s pack. I don’t want to be around for whatever apocalypse Tubbo kickstarts.”

**179.**

Dream frowned, scanning the horizon. Tommy had sent him a message to meet him here, but the other looper was nowhere in sight. Was this meant to be another prank? But then why call him out to the middle of nowhere? Tommy *liked* having witnesses to his pranks. Unless there were people hiding behind those boulders about ten feet away, there shouldn’t--

“DREAM!”

Dream jolted, turning around. He’d heard Tommy’s voice, but it was so faint he wasn’t sure where it was coming from.

"DOWN HERE!"

Dream looked down. A tiny figure glowered up at him, arms crossed and emerald-flecked wings ruffled with agitation. Dream blinked and rubbed his eyes to make sure he wasn't hallucinating. "Wh-- Tommy, is that *you*?"

"No, it's fuckin' Parliament here to slap you for tax evasion-- *OF COURSE IT'S ME, DUMBASS! NOW SIT DOWN SO I DON'T HAVE TO SHOUT ALL THE FUCKING TIME!*"

Bewildered, Dream lowered himself to the ground. Tommy huffed, crossing his arms and pulling himself up to his full four-inch height.

"Fuckin' finally. Look, I need your help."

"Holy shit," Dream blurted. Even in all the loops he'd been through, he'd never seen Tommy *shrink* without changing his proportions. "You're *tiny*! What happened to you?!"

"Okay first of all, fuck you. I might be physically small, but I'll have you know that my personality makes up for it! Second. . . y'know how I've been working on hybrid potions? I finally got a perfect balance on animal-human traits, but I didn't expect to get *shrunk*. Hurt like a bitch, too. Zero out of ten." Tommy shuddered. "Which, uh, about that-- I need you to clean up."

"Clean up?"

"Yeah. I think the hybrid potions work differently - I didn't compress, I kinda just. . . left most of myself behind. Doesn't look much like me anymore, but my clothes are in the mess too - if Wil or one of the others goes into my house--"

"--they'll think you're dead, blame it on me, and our truce will be ruined."

"Yup."

Dream frowned. "Have you tried drinking milk?"

Tommy made a face. "I don't think my body can regrow *this much*, and I'm not putting myself through a wringer *again*. 'Sides, I wanna see what being a bug is like."

"A. . . bug?"

"I'm tiny and bite people." Tommy gestured to himself. "Bug."

Dream eyed his toothy grin with a healthy dose of wariness. ". . . What hybrid are you supposed to be?"

"A hummingbird."

"Don't you usually work with crows? Why a hummingbird?"

Tommy flushed red, the crimson feathers tucked behind his ears flaring with embarrassment. “They’re pretty,” he snapped. “What, you have a problem with that? Because I also got these nice, pointy claws now--”

Dream raised his hands. “Nope. No problems. None whatsoever.”

“That’s what I thought, bitch.”

“How are you *more* terrifying when you’re shrunk?”

“Because I can sneak into your house now,” Tommy hissed. “I’ll climb in through your chimney, or burrow in through your walls. Like a mouse. A flying mouse. *Fear me.*”

“I’ll set mousetraps.”

“You think that would stop me?”

It wouldn’t, and they both knew it. Dream fumbled for a not-so-subtle subject change. “Uh. Anyway. We should probably hide the body before someone finds it. Do you, uh, need a ride? Or are you just going to fly there?”

“. . . Can’t fly right now,” Tommy admitted. “Just slow fall. I have no idea how to use my wings.”

“A ride, then.” Dream tried to pick Tommy up, but the other looper backpedaled out of reach.

“Fuck no,” he hissed. “Put your hand on the ground. I’m not getting scruffed like a fuckin’ *kitten.*”

Dream shrugged and laid his hand on the ground, wincing when Tommys talons dug into the palm of his hand as he climbed on. Carefully, he lifted him up and deposited him on his head. The second looper instantly grabbed two handfuls of hair.

“Ow-- can you not?”

In retaliation, Tommy *tugged*. Dream sighed with exasperation and carefully rose to his feet.

“Alright. We’ll head to your house first and clean up - and then we’re getting you some better clothes.”

“*You* try making a toga out of a handkerchief when you’re four inches tall, fucker.”

---

“Hm,” said Dream, looking at what had been Tommy. “I don’t think I can clean this up.”

“You could burn it,” Tommy said.

Dream allowed for five seconds of loud, judgmental silence.

“I have a flint and steel? If you want it?”

“Tommy, the idea was to *not* draw attention from the L’Manbergians. Starting a fire in the middle of L’Manberg will draw attention.”

“Eh. Wilbur’s pretty unobservant.”

“Fundy and Tubbo aren’t.”

“Come on, Dream, live a little! What’s life without a little arson?”

“Tommy, this is a terrible idea--”

“You know you want to.”

“Tommy--”

“Ar-son! Ar-son! Ar-son!”

“Tommy I *swear to Prime--*”

---

“Why do I listen to you?” Dream wondered as they stared into the inferno that had been Tommy’s house.

Tommy, now perched on his shoulder, threw his head back with a cackle. “I’m your shoulder devil now,” he decided. “I’m gonna make you do *so much crime--*”

“Tommy, what I need is a *conscience*. You’re going to make things worse.”

“Sounds like a you problem, Dream.”

Dream’s reply was cut off by a shout. The loopers turned to see all four members of L’Manberg sprinting towards him, water buckets in hand and fury in their eyes. “DREAM!” Wilbur shouted. “STOP!”

“For your information,” Dream called, “Tommy asked me to do this.”

Wilbur’s gaze flipped from angry to *downright murderous*. “Where’s Tommy? *What did you do to him?*”

“‘ELLO, FUCKERS!”

Multiple gazes zeroed in on the tiny Tommy sitting on Dream’s shoulder. The hummingbird hybrid scowled at them and flipped them off.

“YES, IT'S ME. STOP STARING.”

Wilbur made a noise not dissimilar to the cry of a concussed whale. “Tommy,” he began, only to cut himself off and blink rapidly. “You-- you’re a hybrid?”

Tommy puffed up, wings mantling with pride. “I’M THE BIGGEST AND POGGEST HYBRID OF ALL TIME. STAND IN AWE OF MY PRESENCE.”

“You’re an *avian*, too,” Wilbur whispered. He clutched his head. “Prime, why didn’t I see it? *How* didn’t I see it?”

“He’s a late bloomer,” Fundy pointed out, ever the voice of reason. “Late bloomers don’t have the same signs as normal hybrids.”

“Holy shit!” Tubbo rushed forward, unheeding of Eret’s attempt to pull him back. He seemed to have completely forgotten the fact that Dream had been threatening to kill him the day before. “You’re *tiny*!”

“I am *not*, ” Tommy snapped.

“You are not,” Tubbo agreed without missing a beat. He held out his cupped hands and sent a pleading look towards his friend. “Can I hold you? Please?”

“No,” Tommy sniffed, clinging tighter to the cloth of Dream’s hoodie. “Dream’s shoulder is comfy.”

“Tommy, come here,” Wilbur tried to coax. “It’s not safe.”

“I won’t hurt him,” Dream said.

Wilbur rounded on him, a snarl twisting the corners of his mouth. “Bullshit. You were threatening to kill all of us and burn L’Manberg to the ground *yesterday*-- ”

“But I didn’t actually kill you--”

“--you *have* tried to stab us before--”

“--listen, times have changed--”

“--it’s been *a week*! You think I’m going to forget attempted murder in a *week*? ”

“I would say it’s been longer than a week, actually--”

“*You*-- ”

A loud chirp rang out above the argument. Heads turned towards Tommy, who had gone pale with horror.

“*No*,” he began, only to cut himself off with another chirp. He clamped his hands over his mouth. Unfortunately, the muffled chirping only grew louder.

“Oh Prime,” Dream whispered with growing glee. “You have the *instincts*, too.”

Tommy uncovered his mouth, cheeped once, and bit him. The resulting screech was quite satisfying.

180. remix, pt. 13 ( [see previous parts of this loop here](#) )

***TW: Referenced Abuse, Minor Suicidal Ideation***

Sapnap sprinted through the forest, following the trail of crushed flora the party ahead of him had left behind. He’d been mining when he got Quackity’s message about going off to confront Tommy, and by the time he’d gotten to Spawn, they were already gone.

So here he was, trying to catch up with them. He could only thank the heavens for the years spent chasing after Dream; he’d have run out of stamina long ago if it wasn’t for the manhunts.

Hazy shadows became visible through the trees. “*Wait!*” he shouted. Several of the figures stopped short and whipped around to face him, weapons materializing in their hands. He skidded to a stop, panting with exertion, and raised his hands to show that he was unarmed.

“Sapnap,” Quackity greeted, lowering his axe. The others warily followed his example. “You made it.”

“You really -- think I was-- going to stay-- out of this?” Sapnap bit out between gasps for air, glowering at him. “He’s my friend.”

“We’re wastin’ time,” a monotone voice cut in. Sapnap’s gaze snapped up to meet Technoblade’s. The piglin hybrid nodded towards the two hounds nosing their way through the foliage, already a good five yards or so ahead. “The hounds’re goin’ to leave us behind. Can you keep up?”

Sapnap straightened and forced his breathing to even out. He squared his shoulders in silent challenge. “I can. Lead the way, Technoblade.”

---

“Welcome to my humble abode!”

Tommy tried not to feel *too* smug at the stunned look on Dream’s face as he hobbled out of the stairwell. “Holy shit,” the man breathed. “This place is *huge*. ”

“Took me weeks,” Tommy admitted. “Worth it, though.” He’d had *fun* building this base, loathe as he was to admit it. He was really quite proud of everything he’d done with it.

Dream turned in a slow circle, wincing as several of his newly-healed muscles protested the movement. By the look on his face, he did not share Tommy's opinion. "Mm. I do have to ask - how has your taste gotten *worse* across the loops?"

"Excuse you, my builds are beautiful--"

"It looks like you just decided to slap cobblestone in random-- is that a *throne*?"

"--gotta keep up my evil tyrant look, Dream, you know how it is--"

"That is the *ugliest* throne I've ever seen--"

"At least I have *creativity*! Your idea for an evil base was literally just blackstone! Not a *single* chair anywhere--"

"--I didn't need chairs, because unlike you I don't have *weak-ass legs*."

Tommy punched him in the arm. Dream cackled.

"Wow, Tommy. Resorting to physical violence because you can't come up with a better argument?"

Tommy took a step towards him. "Oh I'll *show* you physical violence, you--"

Their banter was cut off when the hum of the portal stationed at the other end of the room abruptly rose in pitch. A dark silhouette wavered into existence, soon resolving itself into the form of a familiar piglin hybrid.

"Oh," said Tommy. "Well, fuck."

---

"This is it," Technoblade said. He hefted his sword and threw a glance at the rest of them. "Ready?"

A round of murmured assents answered his question. Technoblade gave a sharp jerk of his head, then turned on his heel and disappeared into the portal. Philza followed a moment later, his void-black wings pinned back with apprehension.

Sapnap was next. He hesitated just before entering the frame, taking a moment to steel himself. Then, with a deep breath, he plunged into the light.

When the violet cleared, he found himself in a large, vault-like structure. Soul torches lined the marble walls, their azure fire casting the room with cold light. A raised platform sat at the other end of the room, bracketed by braziers and topped with a garish cobblestone throne. Tommy and Dream stood at the foot of the throne, both staring at the assembled rescue party



with surprise. Tommy's hand was poised in the air. Dream was half-crouched, his arms raised as though to ward off a blow.

Sapnap saw red. "*Get away from him,*" he snarled, sounding more animal than human. The others were already moving in, forming a blockade and herding Dream away from Tommy.

"How--" Tommy began, then zeroed in on the hounds pacing around Technoblade's feet. "Oh. Huh."

"Tommy," Tubbo said. "This ends now."

Sapnap took his eyes off of Tommy for a moment to check on Dream. He seemed unharmed, save for the silvery scars that crossed his face like cracks in pottery. Philza and Technoblade hovered nearby, one asking questions in quiet, intent undertones while the other settled protectively in front of him.

Dream met Sapnap's gaze over Technoblade's shoulder. His eyes widened with something resembling surprise before he schooled his expression into one of neutrality. Sapnap recalled that the last time they'd seen each other was when Tommy led him out of the courtroom. Sapnap hadn't stopped them. If he'd *known*--

He jerked his gaze away and adjusted his grip on his axe, fixing his glare on the true threat in the room. It was too late for regrets. The only thing he could do now was to make sure Tommy *never* got to Dream again.

---

Tommy gritted his teeth and slid Dream's mask over his face, thankful beyond measure that it hid his expression. He'd let his guard down, let his act drop as he *finally* got some alone time with Dream. The others weren't supposed to find them yet. His base was supposed to be *safe*.

One moment, he'd been joking around with Dream. The next, the others had barged in with their weapons drawn, separating the two of them and backing him into a corner. He *should* act like the villain he'd been playing this loop, but the sudden turn of events had left him shaken and scrambling to pull on his facade.

"You've-- you've gone too far," Tubbo was saying. "I know you're angry, but it doesn't-- you don't have to keep doing this. Just-- come with us peacefully, and we can talk it out."

Tommy forced a noise of incredulity through his teeth. "*I've gone too far?*" He demanded. "So it's fine that Dream destroys my home and *kills* me *twice*, but I kill him *once* and suddenly *I'm* the bad guy?"

"That's not what this is about," Sapnap growled.

"Oh *yeah*? Then tell me what it's *about*, because from where I'm standing you're all--"

“*Tommy*,” Tubbo interrupted before the argument could escalate. “Please. Stand down. You’ve done enough.”

“And *what* exactly have I done?”

“You framed Dream. You blackmailed him, threatened *innocents* to force him to cooperate. You blew up Technoblade’s house, nearly killed him *and* Philza, who only has *one life*-- ”

“It’s for L’Manberg, Tubbo! Don’t you get it? Those bastards destroyed us! Dream gave Wilbur that TNT, helped tear our nation down - Technoblade set fuckin’ withers on us! They needed to pay for what they did--”

“How long has it been since you spent a night in L’Manberg?”

Tommy blinked, caught off guard. “What the fuck does that have to do with anything?”

“Tommy,” Tubbo said, and the word was heavy with such disappointment that Tommy felt like he’d been struck in the face. “The Anarchists were happy to leave us alone. We had a ceasefire. Dream was out of the way, exiled. He could have stayed there. You didn’t-- you didn’t need to-- blow up Techno’s house, or-- or *hurt* Dream like that. You love L’Manberg, I know you do-- but you haven’t-- you never considered the consequences. You’re not doing this for L’Manberg. You’re doing this for yourself.”

Tommy grasped for a retort and came up with nothing. He felt like his chest had been filled with ice. His heart pounded in his ears, and he realized with sudden clarity that this wasn’t a game anymore. This was real. The anguish in Tubbo’s voice, the hatred in Sapnap’s glare, the *fear* written into the set of Fundy’s mouth - it was real.

He looked, really *looked*, at Dream. Even after several weeks with Technoblade, the waxy pallor of his skin and the gauntness of his features had barely faded. He’d thought Dream would stop if they went too far - but with everything that happened across the loops, their definitions of *acceptable boundaries* had become skewed. Did he really expect the man who’d been willing to *starve himself* for an *act* to realize what was and wasn’t okay?

The self-loathing curled behind his ribs dug in its claws and *gouged*. This loop had changed him, and not for the better. He’d hurt his friends but justified it with the thought that they wouldn’t remember what happened - exactly the pitfall he and Dream had been trying to avoid since the loops *started*.

Shit. *Shit*. They’d messed up *big time*.

Finger by finger, Tommy released his grip on his axe. It clattered to the floor. Tubbo stared at him, eyes wide, but all Tommy could see was the grief weighing down his shoulders. Grief that had been Tommy’s fault. Grief that was all because of a stupid idea taken too far.

With a shuddering breath, he sunk to his knees. “That’s it,” he croaked. Tears welled in his eyes. “That’s it. I’m done. We’re done. I can’t do this anymore.”

The silence following his declaration was broken by a commotion in the back of the crowd. Tommy looked up to see Dream fighting his way to the front, shrugging off the hands that tried to pull him back. He crossed the distance between them in three strides and dragged Tommy into a hug, ignoring the cries of alarm from their audience.

“Fuck, Dream,” Tommy whispered. He pressed his masked face into Dream’s shoulder and brought his shaking arms up to return the hug. “I fucked up. I fucked up so bad.”

Dream closed his eyes. “We both did.”

Sapnap marched forward, axe ready and eyes colder than ice. “Tommy, step away from him.”

(“*Dream, step away from them.*”)

The sheer *irony* of the parallels to loop zero wasn’t lost on either looper. Dream broke out of the hug and burst into *howling* laughter, doubling over and nearly dragging Tommy down with him. Tommy staggered under the unexpected weight, but he was too busy biting down his own semi-deranged chortling to do much more than try to hold Dream up. Sapnap stopped in his tracks, his bewildered gaze darting between the two of them.

“Dream,” another voice growled. Tommy raised his head to see Technoblade stepping up to Sapnap’s side, face dark. “Get away from him.”

“No,” Dream managed to choke out between hysterical giggles.

Technoblade’s brow furrowed. “Dream, you’re not thinking clearly. Tommy’s been messin’ with your head--”

Tommy’s strangled snickering devolved into full-on cackling. “*Fuck,*” he gasped between bouts of laughter, pushing his mask aside to wipe frantically at the tears dripping down his chin. “Fucking fuck we fucked this up *so bad--*”

Dream’s own laughter was dying down now, dissolving into quiet weeping. This was apparently too much for Sapnap, who reached out and tried to physically pry Dream away from Tommy.

“*No!*” Dream snapped, so acidic that Sapnap physically recoiled. He tightened his grip on Tommy, pulling him into another hug. Tommy curled into it, blocking out the rest of the world. He couldn’t look at his former friends. He couldn’t face what he’d done.

“Dream--” Sapnap said.

“You don’t understand,” Dream said. His voice was breathy, pitched high with long-restrained emotion. He backed away, pulling Tommy with him. “He didn’t-- he didn’t hurt me. This is just a misunderstanding.”

“Dream.” And *oh*, the genuine concern in Philza’s voice felt like a punch to the gut. “Please, mate. Let us help you.”

“I don’t *need* help! This wasn’t-- it wasn’t *real*!”

“Is that what he made you think?”

Tommy stiffened at the prickling *rage* curled in Technoblade’s voice. In the next moment, he found himself pinned to the ground, the point of Technoblade’s sword hovering mere inches from his eye. Dream was kicking at Sapnap and Philza, trying to twist himself free as they wrestled him away. “No! Stop! *Stop it!* It wasn’t real! I WAS LYING, DAMN IT! *LET HIM GO!*”

Tommy felt the fight drain out of him. He went limp, barely twitching even when the blade grazed his cheek. This was it. This was his worst nightmare come to fruition. If Technoblade didn’t kill him now, he’d be locked up, stripped of his freedom and left to rot. Either way, he’d never see Dream again in this loop - the others wouldn’t let them anywhere *near* each other, not even if he became a ghost.

Technoblade was still glaring at him, all hot fury and cold calculation. “What did you do to him?” he asked, only to whip his sword up at the last moment to deflect a blow. “. . . All you L’Manbergians ever do is betray me, huh?”

“Don’t hurt him,” Tubbo said, voice wavering but eyes sharp.

“I’m not goin’ to *kill* him. I just want to ask some questions.”

“Don’t hurt him,” Tubbo repeated. Quackity and Fundy flanked him, forming a circle around Technoblade and Tommy. “You can ask him questions once we’ve made sure he won’t run.”

*I don’t trust you not to kill him*, went unsaid. Technoblade surveyed his opponents, then grudgingly got off of Tommy and hauled him up. Tubbo slid a pair of handcuffs around his wrists, and then Tommy found himself being hustled into a makeshift obsidian cell. He began giggling at the sheer *irony* of it all, only to cut himself off when Fundy flinched.

Fuck. This was *so fucked up*. He didn’t want to do this. He *couldn’t* do this. His eyes darted towards the iron bars, and for a moment, he considered pitching forward and-- but no, that wouldn’t fix anything. The others would still be upset, and Dream would still be stuck, and--

A familiar itch sparked in his stomach. Tommy’s knees went weak with relief. He staggered sideways, leaning heavily against the obsidian with a whisper of “*thank fuck.*” On the other side of the room, Dream went still. Technoblade, sensing that something was wrong, turned back towards Tommy with a demand for information-- but he was too late.

The abyss yawned beneath them, gold-mottled strings wrapping around their souls and pulling them *back*. It was the beginning of a new loop, a restart that wiped all their mistakes from existence.

Tommy closed his eyes and welcomed it with open arms.

That's a wrap for remix!! :D hopefully it lives up to your expectations. If you all want to see an alternative end, see [this amazing one](#) written by tigergrace!

There's also a [fic](#) that explores what happens if remix is the final loop by A\_Random\_Shadow!

So. Now that remix is finished. We have two options.

1) continue the [dreaxter](#) loop. I have no idea where to take this loop, but if any of y'all have ideas on how to conclude it please share!!

2) I discontinue dreaxter and start an Egg-Infected!Tommy loop, which will be very angsty

Y'all know the drill now - [vote here](#)!

Some [wonderful remix fanart](#) by matchakaros!

[More Tempus!Karl](#) by Astral! :D

[Some ot!Tommy](#) by Denky!

Aivoze drew [me](#) for the last day of oktober!! Her artstyle is so prettyyyy

Also a new inspired fic: [harry\\_potter timeloop](#)!

### **Loop Notes**

**177.** George knew Karlnapity was already together. When Dream was talking to George about his plan, Sapnap was frantically signing at George through the window, telling him not to tell Dream.

(Also disclaimer: don't try to matchmake your friends like this. it's not very funny irl.)

**178.** Tubbo did, in fact, figure out how to make guns. The server never stood a chance.

**179.** He's finally figured out the formula for hybrid potions! They're going to have a lot of fun messing around with those in the next few loops. On another note, Philza's Chat took one look at tiny, winged, Tommy, and unanimously decided to adopt him.

# Chapter 37

## Chapter Notes

Aight here's the deal

Eggpire! Tommy won *but* enough of you left ideas (seriously special thanks to the people who left like an entire paragraph what the heck /pos) that I managed to scrape together an outline for the rest of dreaxter. Also a bunch of you asked for both and ily all so I'm going to finish dreaxter, then start on the new loop.

### Spotlighted Comments

**bkaer0076:** Tommy: hello I'm a hummingbird hybrid and I'm here to cause the the destruction of all your hopes of having a peaceful life

**Luna3003:** Fun Fact! Aztecs held Hummingbirds in High regard! They thought that hummingbirds had the attributes of good warriors. It is also thought that they considered Hummingbirds were the spirits of warriors revived. Along with a lot of other cool symbolism and connections with gods, but those were the ones that I thought fit Tommy to hummingbirds the most. ALSO They are Tied in with rebirth, I think Its very fitting with the whole time loop going on :)

**aiyun\_0637:** phils crow share one single braincell that went: smol child? Mine now.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

### 181. *(credit to astral)*

“So you-- you *threatened* XD into editing reality?”

“No, I used sup-- sofa-- *sophisticated* persuasion techniques,” Tommy sniffed. “He heard the wisdom of my words, and agreed to my *very reasonable* requests.”

“You tricked him, didn't you.”

“I tricked him,” Tommy admitted. “He's a fuckin' idiot, do you expect me *not* to take advantage of that?”

“I expect you to have enough self-preservation to not trifle with a god who can *smite you*. ”

“He also got smote by a cake,” Tommy pointed out. “And it's not like he can do anything permanent to us.”

“He's a *god*. ”

“And very easy to manipulate.”

Dream pinched the bridge of his nose. “One of these days, you’re going to get both of us smote.”

“Ooo, fun loop idea - whoever gets smote first gets something from the loser next round!”

“Tommy *no--*”

---

“Techno! Techno, get out here!”

Technoblade narrowed his eyes at the door, suspicious of the amusement threaded into Philza’s voice. “One second,” he called back, sliding a bookmark into the book he was perusing and setting it down on the table. After a moment of hesitation, he pushed the door open.

The arctic wind blasted him in the face. After he’d given himself a moment to adjust to the cold, he stepped out and set a particularly unimpressed stare on his longtime friend. “What.”

Philza was *beaming*, face alight with a particular brand of mischief that Technoblade had fallen prey to many times. He had a pig on a lead at his side. Technoblade glowered. “Phil, if this is another one of your attempts at a joke--”

“Heh?”

Technoblade stopped. Looked around. No parrots in sight. Slowly, he turned to Philza, who was grinning like a loon.

“. . . Phil,” he said. “Did you learn mimicking?”

“Nah,” Philza drawled. He tugged the pig forward by its lead.

“Heh?” said the pig.

“*Heh?!?*” Technoblade said back.

Philza doubled over, cackling his heart out. His friend rounded on him, spluttering with indignation.

“Phil! Phil, *what is this?* What-- how-- *heh?!?*”

“Dun-- dunno, mate,” Philza wheezed between bouts of laughter. “Just-- woke up and-- th’ pigs were-- *heh-- ahaha--*”

“This isn’t funny,” Technoblade protested. The pig “heh”ed at him. “*Stop heh-ing me!*”

“Heh,” went the pig.

“HAHAHAHAHA,” went Philza. Technoblade debated the pros and cons of kicking him and tried to convince himself that it wouldn’t be worth it. The longer the laughter dragged on, however, the more tempting it became.

Fortunately for Philza, he managed to regain control himself about five seconds before Technoblade reached his breaking point. As he straightened up, a crow alighted on his shoulder. Philza tilted his head towards it, wiping the last tears of mirth from his eyes. “Hey, mate. What is it?”

The crow clicked its beak. Philza’s voice emanated from its throat. “You little shits.”

“Oh whAT THE FUCK--”

---

“What,” said Fundy.

The chickens in his coop milled about, acting as if everything was perfectly normal. The problem was, everything was *not* normal. As in, every time a chicken opened its beak, a child’s voice would exclaim, “look at all those chickens!”

“How,” said Fundy. “Do you-- do you understand me?”

A tiny chick hopped up to him, chirped a high-pitched “look at all those chickens!” then toddled off to find its mother.

“I think I need to sleep,” Fundy informed the chickens. The chickens ignored him. Fundy stepped out of the chicken coop, locked the door, and began the trek homewards.

The sun was setting, casting the forest in ochre. The shadows deepened as sunlight faded into icy moonlight. A quiet scuffling just at the edge of his hearing range had Fundy turning, tail bristling.

A baby zombie sat astride a chicken in the shadowy underbrush, watching him. Fundy backed away. The duo apparently took this as an act of aggression, because the chicken charged him with a screech of “LOOK AT ALL THOSE CHICKENS!”

Fundy decided that was enough insanity for one day and fled for his life.

---

“Hey. Hey, Dream.”



Dream slowly turned around, dread in his heart. That dread multiplied tenfold when he saw the kitten cradled in Tommy's arms. "What did you do this time?"

"What, can't I get a cat for my good old friend--"

"We're not friends."

"--*best* friend Dream?"

"What did you do this time," Dream repeated. When Tommy's only reply was to hold the kitten out, he reluctantly took it.

It snuggled into his arms and opened its mouth as though to meow. Electronic music blasted forth.

Dream stared at it. Then he stared at Tommy. "You didn't."

"I did."

"*Why?*"

Tommy *smiled*. "Praise be to the Cat of Nyan."

---

"Can I . . . ask why you're hoarding cows?"

Ranboo and Jack glanced at each other, nodded in silent agreement, and turned back to Niki. "They're the only safe animals left on the server," the taller informed her.

Niki frowned. "Safe animals?"

In answer, Ranboo pointed to a sheep wandering by a few yards away. It paused to pick at a few strands of grass, bleated out a verse of Bohemian Rhapsody, and moved on.

"Ah," said Niki. ". . . So the cows still moo?"

"The cows still moo," Jack confirmed. "So now we're rounding them all up."

At that moment, the content mooing from the pen went silent. All three Players turned to see the cows standing stock-still, their eyes blown wide. Then one raised its head and bellowed a reverberating "YOU LACK MAIDENS!" at the top of its lungs.

"Ah," Jack said as the other cows also began to repeat the phrase. "I guess the cows no longer moo."

"Guess not," Ranboo agreed. And then he burst into tears.

---

Sam paused with his pickaxe half-buried in a diamond block. Distant music filled his ears, a tinkling tune he hadn't heard since he'd been a child.

Quickly, he mined out the rest of the diamond vein and headed in the direction of the music. *How* ice cream truck music was playing in the caves, he wasn't sure, but he was damn well going to find out.

The tunnel grew wider as he went deeper. It soon began snaking back and forth, as natural caves tended to do. Sam placed down torches as he went, cutting down the occasional zombie with extreme prejudice. Strangely enough, the volume of the music fluctuated at random intervals - almost as though the source of it was moving. Maybe there really was an ice cream truck down here?

Sam turned a corner and came face to face with a creeper. He scrambled back, cursing to high heavens as it advanced on him. The music grew louder and louder, ringing off the cave walls until it was nearly deafening. He realized belatedly that it was coming *from* the creeper, as though it had replaced its hissing.

"What the *f--* "

*BOOM!*

---

Ignoring the horrified shouts of the L'Manbergians, Technoblade slammed the third skull down on the pile of soul sand. The wither spawned with a shout of "YOOOOOOO! SUCK IT, GREEN BOY!"

"WHAT THE *FUCK!*" Dream screamed from his perch atop the TNT grid. The other fighters weren't doing much better. Philza had puffed up in a rather accurate imitation of a startled chicken. Tommy was *absolutely fucking losing it* in his corner of the battlefield, much to the exasperated bewilderment of his allies. A few of said allies were also in the midst of various trauma-induced panic responses. Poor Fundy looked like he was ready to vibrate out of his skin.

Technoblade was taking it the best, having apparently decided to just roll with the insanity. He spawned another wither, prompting a second round of "YOOOOOOO! SUCK IT, GREEN BOY!"

"*TOMMY!*" Dream howled, bodily hurling himself off the TNT grid and using a water bucket to break his fall. He leapt over one of Technoblade's hounds (which was currently

barking out bits of Megalovania while it tried to tear Sapnap to pieces) and made a beeline towards his fellow looper. Tommy's face dropped into an expression synonymous with "oh shit."

"XD!" he shouted. "XD, INITIATE PART 2!"

Dream stopped in his tracks as something *shifted* in the world around him. "♪Tommy, wha-- what--♪" He reached up to massage his throat, as though that would somehow remove the odd autotune effect that had been applied to his voice. "♪♪What the fuck. What the actual fuuuuuck. What did you do. Whyyyyyy are you like thiiiiis.♪"

Tommy was laughing too hard to reply.

"♪I am going to murder you,♪" Dream promised, raising his sword. "♪I am going to stab you to death.♪"

Tommy, still laughing, tried to back away. He tripped over a loose stone and hit the dirt. "Oh shit--"

He had about half a second to contemplate his life decisions and decide he regretted nothing. Then Dream was upon him.

## 182. (credit to Cocomere)

"This is the end, Dream." Tubbo stalked forward, knuckles white around the handle of his axe. "This is it. This is where you die."

He was so focused on Dream that he didn't hear the rapid footsteps coming up behind him, nor the cries of alarm from the crowd at his back. A moment later, a hand wrapped around his axe and *yanked*. Caught off guard, Tubbo staggered sideways. The weapon was ripped from his hands. He spun to face his assailant, eyes going wide when he realized their identity.

"And that's where you're wrong," Tommy cackled. "Because *I* was the true mastermind all along!"

The sound of shattering glass punctuated the end of his dramatic declaration. The server members turned to see that the Ender portal - their only way out - had been broken.

"You *fools*," Tommy continued, his words dripping with malice. "You feel right into my trap. You see, I've *despised* you all since the day I joined the server. I wanted to *hurt* you - and how better to hurt you than to turn a trusted friend against you?" He slung an arm around Dream, who twitched but didn't throw him off. "I recruited *Dreamy* here and hired him to play the villain. Then I'd be the *hero*--" here he leaned against Dream and swooned dramatically, "--play the good guy, get your trust and at the last moment-- *crush it!*"

Tubbo spoke up, voice wobbling. "Tommy-- Tommy, this is-- you're joking, right? This is-- this is just a joke--"

“Oh *Tubbo*,” Tommy cooed. He pushed himself away from Dream and sauntered over to Tubbo, who was growing paler with every second. “So trusting. So *stupid*. You know, it’s been hilarious watching you try to run L’Manberg. You tried, I’ll give you that, but you just couldn’t win against me.” He smiled, slow and sharp. “I drove Wilbur to insanity, poisoned Schlatt, and plotted every step to L’Manberg’s doom. And *you*-- you trusted me with L’Manberg’s internal affairs.”

Tubbo took a step back. Ranboo hurried forward to steady him. Tommy rolled his eyes, turning to the rest of the room.

“Not that any of you lot were any better. Really, you all bought my act so easily. None of you noticed a thing.” Tommy shook his head in mock disappointment. “All because I’m Tommy. Just Tommy. And really, what can Tommy do to you?”

“Tommy,” someone whispered. Tommy snorted.

“Joke’s on you, I did a *lot*. *I* was the one who helped Dream set up the TNT grid on Doomsday. *I* was the one who told him all the secrets you told me in confidentiality, the one who had him steal the things you care most about for leverage. *I* was the one who blew up the community house, who defaced L’Manberg’s monuments with capitalist supply and demand diagrams, who dyed the sheep lime green--”

Gradually, the horror on people’s faces faded into confusion.

--who turned all the candles on the server fireproof, who enchanted your boots with Knockback II and Curse of Binding, who made your clothes one size too big--”

“That was *you*?!” Sapnap shrieked.

--who potioned everything to taste like mangoes for five days, who replaced all the snow on the server with glitter,” Tommy took a deep breath, “and who switched every roll of toilet paper to *under*.”

Stunned silence followed this declaration.

“You monster,” Dream deadpanned. “I can’t believe you’ve done this.”

“*What?*” Fundy blurted, ears pinned back and tail lashing with bewildered agitation. “You-- *what?*”

Tommy threw back his head and *cackled*. It really was quite an impressive cackle, and one he’d spent many hours practicing in front of a mirror. “You were all *so blind*! But at last, I have opened your eyes to the true extent of my power!”

“I have a question.”

Heads turned towards Punz, who didn’t bat an eye. Tommy glowered at the plebeian that dared to interrupt his villainous monologue. “*What.*”

Punz looked decidedly unimpressed. “If you hired Dream, and Dream hired me, am I still getting paid?”

Both Tommy and Dream stared at him. Then they looked at each other. Tommy raised an eyebrow. Dream shrugged. Tommy turned back to Punz. “Uh. . . yes?”

“Cool,” said Punz. He casually relit the portal and saluted Tommy. “I’m out.”

With that, he meandered into the swirling purple. “N-now wait a moment,” Tommy spluttered, but Punz clearly Did Not Give A Fuck™. He was gone a moment later.

“So,” Jack said into the ensuing silence. “Can we all agree that Tommy should at least go to jail for the toilet paper thing?”

### 183.

“Are you just-- eating *raw spinach*?”

Tommy looked down at the cup in his hand, which was indeed filled to the brim with raw spinach. He stabbed his fork into the leaves, shoved them into his mouth, chewed for an uncomfortably long amount of time while maintaining eye contact, then swallowed and said, “Yes.”

Fundy stared at him. “Why.”

“I’m eating my vegetables,” Tommy said. “Unlike a certain *someone* over there.”

Fundy slowly followed his gaze, dreading what he would find. That dread soon turned into open horror. “What the *fuck* are you doing?”

Dream looked up from the abomination on his plate with an expression of guileless confusion. “I’m putting gelato on pizza.”

The fox hybrid was at a loss for word. “That’s-- that’s just-- *no!*”

“Why not? They’re both Italian, right? So theoretically--”

“*That’s not how food works!*”

“Ye of little faith,” Dream sniffed. And then he attempted to cram the whole gelato-covered pizza slice into his mouth.

Fundy felt a *bit* vindicated when he instantly choked.

### 184.

“T-Techno. Techno you g-gotta help. Please.”

“Tommy, why are you here?”

The teenager scowled at him through his chattering teeth, tugging his cloak a little tighter around him. “Didn’t you hear m-me the first five t-times? To ask f-for help, you b-bastard. C-can I come in?”

Despite his misgivings, Technoblade stepped out of the doorway. Tommy looked about two seconds away from keeling over and freezing solid; Technoblade didn’t want to deal with disposing of his corpse. Tommy stumbled into the house and promptly melted with relief at the wave of warmth that rolled over him. “Th-thank *fuck*.”

Technoblade shut the door and turned to him. “Alright Tommy, talk. What do you need help with?”

Tommy took a deep breath. “Dream. I need help with Dream.”

“. . . Are you asking me to kill Dream?”

The teenager’s head whipped up. “Fuck no!” he shrieked, eyes wide. “Nonono, I mean Dream needs help-- he’s-- I don’t know what the fuck is wrong with him! I’m not allowed back in L’Manberg and you were closest so--”

“So you came to me.” Technoblade narrowed his eyes at Tommy, contemplating his dilemma. Truth be told, he held no particular attachments to Dream at the moment - they’d been on opposing sides since he’d stepped foot on the server, save for the bit towards the end of the dumpster fire known as the Manberg-Pogtopia War. That being said, it wasn’t like Dream had done anything *wrong* to him specifically. And they did have something of a friendly rivalry before this server had been formed, so if he really needed help. . . “What’s wrong with him?”

“He’s been getting quieter in the last few weeks,” Tommy babbled, wringing his hands. “He stopped eating, started sleeping more, a-and then this morning he *wouldn’t wake up!*”

Hm. That did sound bad. “Right,” Technoblade said, sweeping past the still-shivering Tommy to pry open a chest. He stuffed several potions into his inventory, added some food for good measure, then grabbed his cape off the hook by his door and wrapped it around his shoulders. “Where is he? Logstedshire?” At Tommy’s nod, he swept his hand up in a come-hither gesture. “Come with me. We’ll be faster on horseback.”

Tommy stared at him, seemingly surprised. Technoblade repeated the gesture impatiently. “C’m on, Tommy. You asked for help, didn’t you?”

“Y-yeah,” Tommy said. He shook himself out of his stupor. “Sorry, just-- didn’t expect you to agree so easily. I came here ready to bribe you an’ shit.”

Technoblade quashed the desire to roll his eyes. “Well, you don’t. Now are you coming or not?”

Tommy scrambled to his feet and followed him.

---

Logstedshire had certainly grown more. . . livable since the last time he'd visited. The dirt shack had evolved into a charming log cabin. It was nowhere near as nice as Technoblade's, of course, but the builder had clearly put effort into constructing it. Technoblade eyed it appraisingly as they approached, making note of the pine branches and homemade tinsel that had been strung up around the walls for the holiday season. It certainly gave the dreary place a more homey feel.

Tommy waited impatiently as Technoblade tied Carl's lead to a stake near Logstedshire's outer wall, then all but dragged him into the house. Technoblade allowed the manhandling with a longsuffering sigh, knowing what little sense of manners Tommy had had probably been overridden by his worry.

Dream was sprawled on one of the two beds in the room, still save for the unnaturally slow rise and fall of his chest. His mask was conspicuously absent. Technoblade prodded experimentally at his cheek, then jerked away when he found his skin cold to the touch. It wasn't cold in the way dead bodies felt, however, and Dream was clearly still breathing. And there was that odd *sheen* to his skin. . .

Technoblade narrowed his eyes and brushed aside the tangled hair that had fallen over Dream's face. "Ah," he said aloud, looking at the patches of gray-green scales that crept up the man's cheekbones. "I didn't know he was a hybrid."

Tommy froze, blinked, then blinked again. "Uh. Does that. Does that affect anything?"

"Depends on what kind of hybrid--"

"Snake. He's a snake hybrid."

"Ah." Technoblade's shoulders untensed. "He's fine, then."

"Fine?" Tommy spluttered. "He won't wake up!"

"Tommy. Dream's a hybrid." When Tommy continued to stare at him with that almost-betrayed look, he added, "It's winter."

Slowly, comprehension dawned on his face. "So-- what, he's hibernating?"

"Brumating, actually. He's goin' to be like this for the rest of the winter unless you move him to a warmer spot."

Tommy's shoulders slumped with relief. "So he's okay?"

"He's fine, kid." The endearment slipped out before Technoblade could catch it. Thankfully, Tommy didn't seem to notice. "Just make sure to keep him safe. He's pretty defenseless like this. Try to get some water into him whenever he's lucid enough to drink - he'll be fadin' in and out for the next few weeks. If his skin starts crackin', spray some freshwater on him or use a wet rag."

Tommy nodded distractedly. “Got it. Uh. Do I need to feed him too?”

“Nah. That’d be bad for him, actually. Stick to the water. If he’s not up in two or so months or if he starts lookin’ dangerously thin, move him to a warm spot and wake him up.”

“So. . . I shouldn’t wake him up right now?”

“He’s a hybrid, Tommy. This is part of his nature. Avoidin’ it’ll hurt him in the long run.” Technoblade turned back and pulled the blankets over Dream’s head. “Keep him covered, too - snakes like hidin’ when they’re brumating. He might unconsciously migrate to under the bed sometime in the future, so you might wanna stash a couple blankets down there too. And fair warnin’ - he’s goin’ to be hungry when he finally wakes up, so stock up on vitamin and protein-rich foods.”

“Keep him covered, blankets under the bed, and more food,” Tommy rattled off. He was jotting all of it down in a notebook he’d produced from. . . somewhere. “Got it. Anything else I should know?”

“Nothing I can think of right now,” Technoblade admitted. “. . . I’ll come back in a week to check on things.”

“Okay.” Wow, not even a token protest against the notion of Technoblade invading his home on a regular basis. Tommy was pretty worried about this, huh? “I’ll, uh, go set out some more torches.”

“You do that. Message me if anything seems wrong with him.”

Tommy was already halfway out the door. “Will do!” he called over his shoulder. And then he was gone.

“Just you and me now,” Technoblade told Dream. Dream, predictably, did not reply. Technoblade deliberated for a moment, then slid a few golden carrots into the chest at the foot of his bed and left the house.

Not like he needed them, anyway.

**185.** *(for the previous part of this loop, see 175. in Chapter 35)*

“Dream.”

“Tommy,” Dream greeted, looking up from the journal he was scribbling in. “Here for a revival?”

“No. *I mean--*” Tommy backtracked when Dream’s eyes widened. “--yes, *but not yet.*”

“Not yet,” Dream echoed. “Okay. Then what are you here for?”

“*To talk.*”



Dream did the shifty-eyed thing he did whenever he wanted to avoid a conversation. Unfortunately for him, Tommy was currently the only one between the two of them who could go intangible. “Okay,” he said at last, shutting his journal. “What do you want to talk about?”

Tommy sank down against the wall opposite him. “*Why did you hate me?*”

“I didn’t--” Dream cut himself off mid-sentence, frowning. “Well, okay. I hated you. But I don’t--”

“*It’s fine, Dream. Just tell me.*”

Dream chewed on the inside of his cheek. “. . . I thought you ruined everything,” he said at last. “This-- this place was just supposed to be for me and my friends, you know? A world where we could-- run around, have fun, be one big family. Then you came along, and-- and you ruined it.”

He glanced at Tommy here, gauging his reaction. Tommy carefully kept his face blank. “*Tell me, Dream. Tell me everything from your point of view. I won’t interrupt.*”

Dream narrowed his eyes. “Is this another prank? I thought we agreed to avoid each other for a while after--”

“*For fuck’s sake, Dream, I genuinely want to know.*” Strangely enough, the inclusion of an expletive actually seemed to lessen Dream’s suspicion. The man leaned back against the wall, sinking deep into thought. At last, he spoke.

“The first day you arrived, you broke the rules.” He carefully avoided Tommy’s gaze, instead staring down at a scuff mark imprinted into the obsidian floor. “And then you kept. . . breaking them. And breaking them. And *breaking* them, and then there was just-- fighting and *death* and--” Dream took a deep breath, reaching up to tug at his hair. “And then Wilbur arrived. You didn’t-- up until then, everyone *checked* with me before they invited someone else, but you-- you just sent Wilbur his invite. I wasn’t expecting him, but I let it slide because I thought-- well, I thought maybe you’d calm down a little. He seemed nice, you know?” A broken, bitter laugh slipped past his lips. “Shows how good I am at judging character.”

Tommy was silent. Dream chanced a quick glance at him, then continued.

“So the two of you went off and started a monopoly on potions. Which-- was *not okay* because *everyone* needs potions and if you monopolize it people will-- anyway. When that fell apart, you decided to make your own nation. I was-- I tried to go along with it at first, you know. Do you remember? I tried to make an embassy. But then you wanted to declare independence. You-- you *took* Fundy and Tubbo and Eret, and the five of you were going to split off from the rest of us and--” Dream pulled at his hair again. Tommy’s scalp was stinging just from watching him. “--and splitting up *never* ends well. I just wanted all of us to be *friends*, but here you were, tearing the server apart.” He exhaled through his teeth. “I will. . . admit. . . I wasn’t thinking when I reacted. I was *angry* at you. I wanted to make you hurt. So. I declared war.

“As everything went on, I . . . I got angrier. You just-- kept blaming me! Dream is a tyrant. Dream blew up the country. Dream is evil. But you never asked-- *why* is Dream evil? People don't just blow up countries for no reason. But no-- you and Wilbur and Tubbo are the *good* guys in this story, right? And I'm the villain.” Dream pressed the heels of his hands into his eyes. “*Fuck*. I just-- I wanted to *make* you see things from my perspective, but you *couldn't*, so I just kept *hurting* you because I thought it would *teach* you to stop. But you didn't, and I didn't, and-- and--” He swept a hand towards the obsidian walls around them. The fire in his voice went out as his shoulders slumped in defeat. “--and now we're here.”

Tommy turned Dream's words over in his head. They didn't *burn* like Jack's or Niki's had, yet they still struck him to his core. This changed. . . well, everything. He'd always assumed that Dream was a power-hungry tyrant who couldn't accept even the slightest loss of control, but-- hearing things from his perspective. . .

“*I'm sorry.*”

“Wh--”

“*This isn't forgiveness,*” Tommy cut in sharply. “*I'm not forgiving you. Not now or **ever**. But-- I . . . I think I get it now. I get why you did it. And I'm sorry for breaking your rules.*”

Dream was gaping at him, all stoic dignity lost in the face of his shock. “B-but what I did. It wasn't. It wasn't. . . good.”

“*Oh, no, it was some fucked up shit. Don't get me wrong. I might have pissed you off, but the decisions you made were yours and yours alone. You fucked up. But-- so did I. We both fucked up big time.*” Tommy exhaled harshly, hunching in on himself. “*Comparing our fuck-ups isn't going to fix anything. It's-- it's not about which one of us hurt the other more. I hurt you, you hurt me back, and things just went to shit from there. None of this would've happened if we'd-- well, if we'd **talked** instead of building walls and going to war.*”

“But you didn't *mean* to hurt me,” Dream pointed out. “And you were a-- well, you were a *kid* at the time.”

“*Doesn't change the fact that I hurt you, or that I broke the rules on purpose specifically because I liked upsetting people and causing chaos. Yeah, I was a kid, but-- kids can get held accountable too.*” He paused for a moment, gnawing at his lip. “. . . *I didn't deserve what you did to me. I know that. **Nobody** deserves that. But-- I did do some stuff wrong, and I think-- I think in a better world, I would've had to face proper consequences. You know. A fine, some community service, maybe even jail time-- **real** jail time, not whatever the fuck **this**--*” he gestured at the cell around them, “--*is. But we don't live in a better world. We're here, what's done is done, and I think we've both paid our dues a hundred times over.*”

“I enjoyed killing you,” Dream snapped, almost desperate now. “I abused you because I liked the power rush.”

“. . . *Yeah, that's pretty fucked up. But you're not like that anymore. It's character development, innit?*” Tommy smiled wryly. “*I don't forgive you for what you did. You don't have to forgive me either. But. . . if we're really gonna be stuck in these loops for the rest of*

*eternity, well. Eternity's a long time to hold a grudge. Least we can do is reach an understanding."*

For a minute, the only sound in the cell was the bubbling of the lava. At last, Dream exhaled sharply and let his head fall back against the obsidian. "When did you get so. . . wise?"

The lingering tension instantly dissipated. Tommy puffed up, bristling with indignation. "Oi, bitch, I **am** wise-- I talk wisely all the time--"

"Sure, Tommy." Dream sat up and held out a hand. ". . . Truce? We go back to working together and try to put the past behind us. Start with a clean slate."

Tommy narrowed his eyes. "*We still get to smack each other if we start falling into old habits.*" When Dream nodded in agreement, he scooted forward and grabbed Dream's hand in a firm handshake. "*Truce.*"

Dream tossed him a crooked smile and released his hand. Tommy not-so-subtly wiped his fingers on his pants, then rose to his feet. "*Well. Now that that's done, could you revive me? I've got some more emotional conversations to have, and I need to be not dead for them.*"

## Chapter End Notes

Did I handle the reconciliation thing okay? Please let me know if you think I'm doing something wrong - abuse is not an easy topic to write about.

Mind the canon divergence tag. ot!dream's motivations are slightly different from c!dream's and since this fic was started before the whole revival mess with Lazar & Vikk was revealed I'm saying it never happened here

Heads up: I'm estimating that Chapter 40 is going to be the beginning of the intermission/final act of this fic. Not sure what that means for final chapter counts exactly, but it'll definitely be over 45 depending on how many new ideas I can write. I may have to pull an all-lore chapter again. Here's to hoping I don't go too fast with the pacing like I did with Dream's redemption arc (;v; )

I started a [new fic](#) in this series - a compilation of loops that I can't write in ot. Will prob be doing something with remix there soon!

Redleaf drew [Snuggles](#)! And [Dreaxter](#)!! I love the little details w/ dreaxter's mask

BuzzyBeeBoi drew some [remix fanart](#)! And the [NPC loop](#) ahahahaha

An adorable [gacha vid](#) by Lee!

And the [cherry bomb gacha trend](#) by Astranomic!

[New inspired fic](#)! Just little oneshots :D

## Loop Notes

**182.** Guys look it's Walmart remix!

**183.** Inspired by true events. No, I will not elaborate.

**184.** Tommy and Dream knew about the cosmetic changes that came with hybrid status, but they weren't prepared to deal with instincts.

# Chapter 38

## Chapter Notes

Posting this one now because I'll probably be busy until January so this'll be the last update of the year!

It's a more fluff-oriented chapter, as promised <3 (I make no promises for the last two loops though)

### Spotlighted Comments

**Gabbygirl317:** Snek boi, snek boi ned warm, snek boi gon wake up eventually, creator of snek boi potion might want to be prepared to run when snek boi wake up

**Mixy\_ttware:** 181. Okay but imagine being in an ancient city and making a noise by accident. The shriekers go off. The light dims. The ground shakes. And right behind you, an enormous and lethal figure goes "I'm here to talk about your car's extended warranty"

**aiyun\_0637:** tommy wearing a monocle and sipping tea: "sophisticated persuasion techniques"

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

### **186. (credit to Mushroom)**

Dream stepped through the portal and was greeted with a scream of “MERRY CHRISTMAS, BITCH!” and a large object headed towards his face. Having experienced this before, he simply dropped into a crouch. The package went sailing over his head, bounced off the portal frame, and hit the ground with a thud.

Dream carefully rose to his feet, eyeing the now slightly-crumpled gift. “This seems. . . familiar.”

“Open it open it open it,” Tommy chanted, practically vibrating in place with sheer excitement. “Hurry *up*, Dream, I’ve been waiting for this for fuckin’ *ages!*”

Dream huffed but obligingly squatted down beside the package. He untied the twine holding it together and peeled back the wrapping paper, then did a double take. “Oh. Wow. This is. *Wow.*”

Carefully, he lifted the shirt from the neatly-folded pile of clothing and shook it loose, turning it this way and that. Tommy had clearly been looking through the Stronghold libraries - the outfit was like something straight out of the illustrated fantasy novels they’d come across, but tailored for better speed and agility. Dream rubbed the fabric between his fingers and was quite pleased to find that it was the same durable material his clothes were usually made of.

In contrast to his prior excitement, Tommy seemed almost. . . *nervous* now. He shifted in place, choosing to look at his handiwork rather than Dream's face. "So. Uh. Do you like it?"

"I love it," Dream declared. He pulled the half-cape from the ensemble and wrapped it around his shoulders. It clashed horribly with his neon hoodie. "How do I look?"

"Like an idiot," was Tommy's deadpan response. "Either put on the entire outfit or don't ruin my beautiful work with your shit fashion sense."

Dream sheepishly pulled the cape off. ". . . I'll change after you get your present."

Tommy's eyes sparked with interest. "Is it a gun?"

The other looper sent him a *look*. "No. It's better if we move into the house for this. My, uh, gift, is a bit. . . large."

"A bazooka?"

"No."

---

Once they were within Logstedshire, Tommy turned expectantly towards Dream. The other looper hesitated for a moment, then reached into his inventory and began the laborious task of withdrawing a *large* bundle from within. By the time he managed to lay it on the ground, Tommy had abandoned all propriety to gape at the present.

It was a lumpy, semi-ovoid package almost as long as Dream was tall. The wrapping paper crinkled where Dream had been holding it, revealing its contents to be squishy. Dream rubbed the back of his head. "So, uh. You know how I've picked up crocheting?"

Tommy turned an incredulous stare towards him. "Dream. Did you make me a body pillow or something?"

"Open it and find out."

Tommy tore into the wrapping paper with the zeal of a kid experiencing their first Christmas. He froze when the mystery item was revealed. "Dream," he said, eyes fixed on the present. "Did you crochet a *giant moth*?"

"Er. . . yes?"

Slowly, Tommy reached into the shredded wrapping paper and patted the moth's head. "Soft," he murmured.

"It's the textured yarn you really like. I got Eret to show me how he made it. Do. . . do you like it?"

Tommy was perfectly still for all of two seconds. And then he let out a shriek of pure *joy*, sweeping the giant crocheted moth up and hugging the living daylights out of it. “*YES! SHE’S SO SQUISHY AND SOFT! AND--* oh Prime wait *her wings unfold!*” He proceeded to unwrap the moth’s wings from its body and pull it around himself like a cloak. “Mmm. Yes. This. This is the best fucking thing ever. Moth hugs.”

Dream’s lips curled up in a fond smile. “Are you going to name her?”

“Clementine,” Tommy said instantly. “Her name is Clementine.”

“What happened to your terrible naming sense?”

Tommy gasped. “Are you insulting my chosen names? My darling *Clementine?*”

“No, I’m insulting ‘tntret’ and ‘Hot Girl’--”

“Shut the fuck up. Those were pog names. And you have no room to talk, you named all your weapons *Nightmare!* The real *peak* of creativity, Dream, amazing how you named everything the *exact same thing--*”

“That was a play on my name! You just throw together random words--”

“--he’s in denial, Clem. This is so sad.”

“--okay now that’s just *rude--*”

“*Shhh.* Go change into your new clothes, Dream. Your eyesore of a hoodie is ruining Clem’s mood.”

When Dream rolled his eyes, Tommy whacked him with one of Clementine’s wings. The man held up his hands and retreated towards the adjacent bedroom. “Okay! I’m going, I’m going!”

“Don’t forget to lace up the boots!” Tommy called after him. He received a middle finger in response.

### **187.** (*credit to Astral, Cocomere, and ori*)

“So what exactly is this ‘very important task’?”

“You’ll see,” Dream said cheerily. He waved off the disgruntled look Punz leveled at him.

“You’ll be fine, I promise.”

“Not going to lie, Dream, paying me a huge amount of netherite and then refusing to tell me my job is kinda suspicious.”

“Trust me, it’ll be fun!”

“... ‘Fun’, as in a fun fight, or--?” Punz cut himself off when they stepped into the Community House. “The fuck is this?”

The one-room building had been filled with beanbag chairs, blankets, and pillows. A new bookshelf had been propped up against the wall and loaded with board games. Tommy and Purpled stood at the center of it all. They turned when Dream and Punz entered, the former lighting up while the latter tensed.

“Dream!” Tommy cheered. “You’re late!”

“Tommy!” Dream returned with an equal amount of enthusiasm. “No I’m not!”

Tommy dropped the false cheer in favor of his usual grin. “Get in here, big D. I have a Monopoly game to win.”

Dream glanced back at Punz, who was hovering by the door. “You coming in?”

“What is this?” Punz repeated. He *seemed* relaxed, but the near-invisible twitch of his fingers revealed he was anything but.

“Game night!” Dream bounded over to the shelf and pulled out a well-loved Monopoly set. “We’re playing Monopoly!”

The mercenary stared at him. “You paid me. . . to play Monopoly with you?”

“This is a very important cause,” Tommy sniffed. “Monopoly with two people is *boring*. Get over here, Purpled. We’re gonna absolutely *destroy* the old’uns.”

Purpled shuffled to his side and sank to the floor, forgoing the beanbag chairs in favor of the ability for a quick escape. Punz assumed a similar position on the opposite side of the board that Dream was laying out. The two mercenaries entered into a staredown, which was broken a second later when Tommy hurled a wad of monopoly cash at Purpled. Purpled caught it on pure instinct, looked down at it, then looked up at Tommy.

“... What is this?”

“Monopoly money? You know? To. . . pay taxes and shit?”

Purpled rifled through the bills. “I don’t know how to play,” he admitted.

“Never too late to learn, Purpleyboy!”

“Never call me that again.”

Tommy raised his hands in mock-surrender and turned to Punz. “Do *you* know how to play Monopoly?”

“Vaguely,” Punz answered, staring at the silver ocelot token in his hand like it was going to come to life and claw his face off. “It’s. . . been a while.”



“Time to relearn, then!” Dream slapped the other three tokens - a wolf for Purpled, a spider for Tommy, and an axolotl for himself - down on the “GO” square. “Tommy, you roll first this time. We can go ‘round clockwise. We’ll learn slash relearn Monopoly--”

“Did you just say ‘slash’ out loud?”

“--as we go!” Dream tossed the dice at Tommy’s face, ignoring Purpled’s incredulous question. The plastic cubes nailed the other looper in the forehead.

“Ow! Fuck! Dream!”

“L,” was Dream’s unsympathetic reply. He picked up the spider token. “Now *roll*.”

With much grumbling and glowering, Tommy rolled the dice. And so began a Monopoly game between two idiots and the bewildered mercenaries they’d contracted.

---

Purpled skimmed through the new contract Tommy had handed him. “Are you. . . paying me to play Monopoly with you again?”

“Uno today,” Tommy said. “I’m going to *beat* that bastard.”

Purpled raised an eyebrow. “Dream?”

“He’s a cheater,” Tommy grouched. “I’ve got no proof, but he wins *every game* we play and it *pisses me off*.”

“So you’re hiring me to beat Dream.”

“*Try* to beat Dream, yeah. I’ll still pay you if you don’t.”

Purpled looked down at the contract again, then held out a hand. Tommy obligingly handed over a Totem of Undying. Purpled pocketed it and tipped his head. “Lead the way.”

“It’s always the Community House, Purpled-- you don’t need to walk behind me every time.”

“It’s harder for you to stab me in the back when you’re walking in front of me.”

Tommy turned his head to stare at Purpled. “. . . What the fuck, man.”

Purpled shrugged. “Paranoia’s part of the profession.”

---

Despite their best efforts, neither Purpled nor Punz could beat Dream in Uno.

On the sixth round, Purpled threw all professionalism out the metaphorical window and attempted to strangle Dream. Tommy cheered him on the entire time.

---

--so the word was 'Tasty', and we have--" Dream took one look at the red cards and promptly doubled over with laughter. The other three exchanged long-suffering looks as he wheezed his lungs out.

Fortunately, the man recovered enough to speak about a minute later. Wiping the tears from his eyes, he readjusted his hold on the cards and cleared his throat.

"Right. We have 'Netherite Ingots', 'The Void', and-- and 'My Friends'." He slapped the cards down as he spoke. "Make your case."

"That's not how this works," Punz pointed out.

"My Apples to Apples judging round, my rules."

The three other players exchanged glances. "Well *obviously* the void is tastiest," Tommy sniffed. "It's got that *flavor*, you know--"

"Spacedust and nothingness," Purpled deadpanned. Tommy pointed at him.

"Exactly! I gotta tell you, spacedust tastes great. Bit like dirt."

"You like the taste of dirt?"

"You put *netherite ingots*! You have no room to talk!"

"They have a nice texture. Crunchy."

"Netherite's inedible."

Purpled looked him in the eye. "Everything's edible at least once."

". . . yeah, but edible doesn't mean tasty."

"Netherite is a kind of metal. Metal is rock. Rock can be made into rock soup. Soup is tasty, and therefore, netherite is tasty. Now can *the void* be made into *void soup*?"

"Spacedust can. You know, mud pies?"

"Wh-- you're. . . not supposed to eat those."

"I ate a ton when I was a kid and I turned out fine."

“I don’t think you can be categorized as ‘fine’,” Purpled deadpanned. “There’s obviously been some brain damage--”

“Oh *fuck you*-- ”

“If I may,” Dream interrupted, “We still have another card.”

The teenager and pseudo-teenager glowered at each other before silently agreeing to a temporary truce. “What was Punz’s card again?” Tommy asked, then did a double take. “Punz, what the *fuck*. ”

Dream tapped the ‘My Friends’ card. “. . . Punz, care to explain?”

Punz shrugged. “Humans are tasty. Simple as that.”

“That--that was a joke, right?”

Punz just *looked* at him.

“Punz? *Punz*? ”

“You’ll never know.”

---

“Purpled! Punz! Come on in, we’re setting up the Game of Life.”

“Schlatt hired us to hurt you,” Purpled said.

There was a pause. Both loopers looked at him, looked at each other, then looked back at him. “Okay?” Dream said. “Does that mean you’re not joining today?”

“He hired us to permanently maim you, Dream.” Punz’s voice was flat. “As in, ‘chop off one of his legs. Make sure he’ll never run again’.”

“Oookay,” Dream said, slower this time. “So maybe starting that anti-capitalist movement in Manberg was a mistake. Actually nah, Niki deserves support and Schlatt’s a dick when he’s drunk so. Yeah. Are you going to play Life with us or not?”

Both mercenaries stared at him. Purpled turned to Tommy. “We were *hired* to *maim you*,” he repeated.

Tommy made a face. “I heard you the first time, bitch. I’m not *that* hard of hearing. Yet. Probably will be if Dream keeps screaming ‘eat the rich’ through that  *fucking*  megaphone *right in my ear*-- ”

“I *said* I was sorry about that!”

Purpled scowled. “Aren’t you worried?”

Dream raised an eyebrow. “Are you going to maim us?”

Purpled and Punz exchanged glances. “Tell you what,” the younger said. “Make me the banker for this game, and I’ll drop the deal with Schlatt.”

“Deal,” Dream said instantly.

“And give me all the orange bills,” Punz added. Purpled scowled at him.

“Half and half,” he bargained. Punz eyed him for a moment, then nodded and held out a hand. They shook on it with great solemnity.

“Wait,” Tommy spluttered. “Does that mean we don’t get any hundred thousands?!”

“Sucks to be broke,” Purpled said unsympathetically. He plopped down in a beanbag chair and scooted next to the game table. “Now gimme a minecart. I’m going to *destroy* all of you.”

“It’s *Life*, Purpled. You don’t destroy people.”

“That’s what you *think*.”

“. . . The fuck does that mean?”

Purpled smirked. “You’ll see.”

## 188.

“Technoblaaaaaade!” Tommy poked his head around the closet doors and held up a bundle of white cloth. “Why the fuck do you have a bunch of giant shirts?”

“Why are you in my closet?” Technoblade countered, grabbing him by the back of his tee and tugging him away. He swiped the oversized dress shirt from his hands. “Give me that.”

“Tech-no-blade,” Tommy whined. “C’mon, tell me! Do you secretly like oversized clothes? You know Dream has an entire *collection* of giant hoodies? Never pinned you to be the type, you’re always so fuckin’ obsessed with looking prim and proper--”

Technoblade wouldn’t be caught *dead* in a hoodie. He had a *reputation* to maintain. “No, Tommy.”

Tommy blinked. “No? Then why the fuck do you have like-- a whole stack of those shirts shoved in the back of your drawers?”

Technoblade stared at him for a long, drawn-out moment. There was genuine curiosity in Tommy’s eyes, but. . . it was overshadowed by something else, too. Something almost

*hungry*, in the way soldiers were hungry after months on the battlefield. He couldn't quite explain it, but. . .

Technoblade sighed. "You can't tell anyone, okay? I'm trustin' you with one of my biggest secrets here."

"I won't," Tommy swore with such solemnity that Technoblade was momentarily taken aback. He'd never seen Tommy like this before - but he knew that look. Tommy would keep his promise.

With a huff, he curled his fingers around the button-down in his hands. "Out," he said.

Tommy spluttered. "Wh-- excuse me?"

"Out," Technoblade deadpanned. "No, you haven't offended me. Now get out, it'll be easier to show you and I don't want you here for this."

Tommy squinted at him, clearly suspicious, but Technoblade didn't back down. At last, the teenager huffed and shuffled into the hallway. Technoblade waited for the door to click shut, then turned the lock.

Slowly, he unfolded the shirt and held it up to the light. The sleeves were wrinkled, and the creases where it had been folded would need a good ironing to erase. He hadn't worn it since. . . since he'd stepped foot on the server, really.

With quick, economical movements, he changed into it and tugged the too-long sleeves above his wrists. With that accomplished, he reached deep into the part of himself he'd hidden away so long ago.

For a moment, there was stillness. And then he *shifted*.

---

Tommy was curious.

There were only so many things to be learned in an endless timeloop, and finding a new bit of information about the non-loopers was always like a breath of fresh air. He'd raided Technoblade's closet with the vague notion of stealing a shirt to cut up for a new design, but he'd gotten sidetracked by the mysterious, neatly-folded piles of clothes in the back of the third drawer.

He waited. He was good at waiting. Three minutes ticked by in silence - and then he heard footsteps through the walls. He jumped to his feet, mouth already opening to greet Technoblade - only to freeze when the door swung open.

Of all the things Tommy had expected to see, a *piglin brute* was not one of them. "WHAT THE FUCK!" he screamed, scrambling back and reaching for his swords. Only the

realization that the piglin was wearing Technoblade's clothes kept him from attempting murder. "Tech-- Techno, is that-- *you*?"

The piglin (???) rolled its eyes in a very Technoblade-like manner. "Yes, Tommy. It's me. Surprise."

"Wh-- you-- what the *fuck*!"

"I gotta tell you, Tommy, your expansive vocabulary is really impressive."

"Fuck you," Tommy replied automatically. He scanned Technoblade's new form, noting the differences.

The most obvious was the species change. Technoblade had appeared human with a few minor hybrid enhancements prior to the shift; his oddly-shaped ears and blood-red eyes were the only markers of his status. Yes, the enhancements had been weaker than what was common for hybrids (i.e. Fundy and his fox parts), but Tommy had just assumed his hybrid traits mainly manifested themselves in instincts, such as his love for gold. Obviously, this was not the case.

The next thing he noticed was the marks. Ropy scars twisted down from the crown of his head, streaked through with dull gold. One of his tusks was cracked. The other was completely gone. The Butcher Army's anvil had left a far greater impression on Technoblade's piglin form.

Technoblade was watching him, posture wary. He clearly expected Tommy to comment on the scars. Tommy, however, thrived off of unpredictability. He reached out and poked him in the arm. "You're *fuzzy*," he said softly.

Technoblade arched a brow. "Yes, Tommy. Thank you for the insightful observation."

Slowly, Tommy looked up. "Can I," he blurted. When Technoblade's other brow joined the first, he added, "pleasecanIhugyou."

". . . What?"

"Hug," Tommy said, and held out his arms.

"What?" Technoblade repeated. On any other day, Tommy would've been proud of the pure bafflement on his face.

"You're fuzzy and big," he explained patiently. "That makes you a good hugger. I want to hug you."

Technoblade blinked slowly, then glanced at the window as though to check if the sky had turned green. "Uh. If you want to hug something big and fuzzy, I've got Steve--"

"You," Tommy insisted. When Technoblade remained uncertain, he defaulted to the skill he'd picked up from Tubbo.

It was a strategy he'd mentally dubbed "act first and bulldoze through the consequences later". As the name suggested, he forewent all worry about possible maiming to wrap his arms around Technoblade. The man went stiff as a board, tail bristling and limbs jerking as though he was fighting off a seizure. As the hug went on, however, he slowly began to relax.

"A little warnin' next time would be appreciated," he grumbled, arms coming up to return the hug.

"I warned you," Tommy muttered, hugging him tighter. "You're so *warm*."

"Yes, Tommy, Nether hybrids tend to be warm. Happens when you're descended from a species that literally lives in hundred-degree temperatures all day."

"37-degree temperatures."

"I'm not gettin' into the American-European metric system debate today."

"Fuckin' coward," Tommy grumbled. He pulled away from the hug. "Why haven't I seen you like this before?"

Technoblade cleared his throat. "Ah, well. I usually keep it as a last resort. If I ever need to tank attacks. . ." he gestured down to himself.

Tommy frowned. ". . . Why didn't you fight the Butcher Army like this?"

"Wouldn't have changed anythin'. I get bigger and slower, and in a fight against multiple enemies, speed is key. They still had Carl, too. Besides, I had a Totem. I didn't want to show all my cards that early. Though I might have miscalculated a bit." He rolled his jaw, allowing his tusks to jut out with the movement. "My head's unbalanced now. Tryin' to fight like this might be more. . . difficult."

He reached up to absentmindedly touch the broken tusk, gaze shadowed with something sorrowful. Tommy bit the inside of his cheek. "Are. . . are you okay?"

Technoblade snapped out of it, jerking his hand away from his tusk. "Huh? Oh. Yeah. It doesn't hurt, it just. . . looks bad. I knew Totems didn't work the same way on this form. This is the first time I've gone from a head injury, though, so." He closed his eyes for a brief moment, then shook his head. "Doesn't matter."

The problem was, Tommy knew it *did* matter. There had been many loops where Tommy sided with Technoblade post-Butcher-Army Era, and several where he'd joined the Syndicate as well. And yet, he'd never seen Technoblade shift.

Simply put, Technoblade was a man who valued his reputation - and his appearance was a part of that. He took pride in the way he dressed and the fear he inspired in his enemies simply by *looking* at them. The golden spiderweb-like scars present on his human form were thin enough to be acceptable, and the worst of it was covered by his hair. The scars on his piglin form, however, were brutal and *noticeable*.

“Well, I think it looks fuckin’ *wicked*,” he declared. “Shows you’re a survivor. All your enemies better be fucking *terrified*, ‘cause anvils can’t keep you down.”

Surprise flashed across Technoblade’s face, so quick that he almost missed it. A moment later, the piglin hybrid huffed and reached out to ruffle his hair. “Don’t talk about things you don’t understand, runt.”

Tommy squawked, batting his hand away. “I’m not a runt!”

Technoblade was unfortunately almost a half-foot taller than him in this form, and so he was fully capable of smirking down at Tommy. “Whatever you say, gremlin.” With that, he turned and headed for his bedroom. “I’m changing back. Don’t break anything.”

“Fuck you!” Tommy shouted at his retreating back. Technoblade didn’t dignify that with a response.

As the door swung shut, Tommy leaned against the wall and sighed. A few words wouldn’t fix everything. He knew that.

But at least for this loop, it was a start.

### 189. *the adventures of dreaxter, pt. 9* ([see previous parts of this loop here](#))

“*Sam!*” Sapnap roared, banging on the door. “Sam, I’m giving you *five seconds* to open this door!”

Five seconds of tense silence ticked by. The door didn’t budge. George turned to Bad and Ant, who were hovering anxiously behind them. “Do you have a key?”

Bad shook his head. “Only the Warden gets access to the surveillance r--”

Sapnap drew his pickaxe and tore into the iron door.

“... That works too, I guess?”

The blaze hybrid kicked aside the last few shards of iron, revealing the surveillance room. The space was illuminated in the eerie glow of several monitors, which were situated on a desk against the far wall. The Warden was slumped in a chair in front of the monitors, silhouetted in their light. He didn’t move as the four of them spilled in.

Sapnap crossed the room in three strides, spun the chair around, and hoisted the Warden - netherite armor and all - up by his collar. “*You*,” he snarled.

The Warden sagged in his grip. “Sapnap,” he said. He sounded. . . exhausted. This wasn’t the Warden persona he wore like armor - this was Sam, just Sam. And Sam was drowning in guilt.



Sapnap's grip loosened by the slightest degree. Sam's knees nearly buckled under him, but he only tottered in place for a moment before he found the strength to stay standing. The concave curve of his shoulders curled tighter, as though he was trying to hide from the numerous glowers aimed his way.

"Sam." The inferno crackling in Sapnap's voice had died down to a simmer, but the glowing of his eyes made it obvious that he was far from pacified by Sam's guilt. "Care to explain what the *fuck* happened to Dream?"

Sam seemed to wilt impossibly *further*. "He. . . he died."

"Yeah, *I noticed*. You're the Warden. You were supposed to keep him trapped, not-- *torture him to death!*"

Sam's head jerked up. "Wh-- I didn't torture him!"

"You're the Warden. You, Bad, and Ant are the only ones with full access to the prison - and seeing how *surprised* they were when they ran into Dream's ghost, I don't think they did it. Which leaves *you*." Sapnap released Sam with a rough shove. The creeper hybrid flinched back as the netherborn jabbed a finger in his face. "You didn't let us into the prison. You locked yourself in your office. Whatever happened when you met Dreaxter upset him enough that he woke up halfway across the server with no idea how he got there. You really expect us to think you're *not guilty*?"

"I let his-- his killer into the prison, but I didn't hurt him!"

"Oh, so that makes it *better*?"

"It wasn't meant to go that far," Sam whispered. "He wasn't-- supposed to *die*. I tried to keep him alive, I patched him up after--"

A resounding *crack* echoed through the room. Sam staggered back, hand rising to the darkening splotch on his cheek. His gaze rose to his attacker, shoulders stiffening with surprise.

"Shut up," George said. His voice was cold and clinical. The darkened lenses of his goggles hid his eyes. Nothing in the calculated alignment of his posture suggested anger. And yet, everyone in the room could tell he was *furious*.

Most believed Sapnap to be the most dangerous when enraged, because Sapnap's wrath *burned* like the core of a dying star. But those close to the formerly-named Dream Team knew George was *worse*. George didn't burn. He *sliced* into his targets with merciless precision, then picked apart the remains with sharp-edged jabs. Everyone in the room had seen him reduce seasoned warriors to tears through words alone.

George himself knew how dangerous he could be - and so he restrained himself. Between him and Sapnap, he was the one who kept a level head and fell back on logic when emotions ran high. He was usually content to stay back and clean up loose ends.

This, however, was not a usual situation. And George was all out of patience.

“Tell me, Sam. Who did it?” The creeper hybrid went stiff like a rabbit in the claws of a wolf. George stepped forward, the *thud* of his shoes against the blackstone piercing the brittle silence. “You couldn’t have done it. It’s not your style. I’ve seen the way you kill. You don’t enjoy it. If you wanted to make Dream suffer, you’d just withhold food. You’re not one to injure someone to *that* extent.” He nodded towards the central monitor, which was still displaying live footage of Dream’s cell. “Of course, you might try to keep them alive through it, which is still torture - but it’s not *killing*. The opposite, really. So, Sam. You said you didn’t kill Dream. I believe you. But if you didn’t do it, *who did?*”

Sam folded like a house of cards. “It was Quackity!” he shouted. “I didn’t-- *Prime*, I’d never hurt him like that--”

Sapnap reared back, clearly surprised by the mention of his fiancé. His shock soon darkened into rage. “Qua-- *Quackity*? Do you think we’re stupid?! Quackity would *never* do something like that!”

“Check the security footage,” Sam snapped back. “George knows how to operate the system.”

Sapnap glanced back towards George, who ambled over to the monitors and inspected the large panel laid out across the desk. “. . . Is this based on Callahan’s--”

“Yes.”

George nodded, then set his hands on the control panel and began fiddling with the systems. Sapnap turned back to Sam. “Bad, Ant,” he called, his glare still fixed on the creeper hybrid. “Did Quackity ever visit?”

The two guards exchanged glances. “I don’t think so?” Antfrost said. “I’ve never seen him, and Sam stopped visitations after Tommy left.”

“He visited when the two of you were patrolling. I-- I took him through routes I knew you wouldn’t be following.”

Sapnap sneered. “Do you have a convenient answer for everything?”

“I’m telling the truth! Why would I lie about it being *Quackity*?!”

“Sapnap,” George called. His eyes were fixed on the central monitor. The redstone control board glowed beneath his fingers. “I found the footage.”

Sapnap strode over to him and peered over his shoulder. A moment later, he went bone-white.

Though the footage was grainy and indistinct, the build and body language of the figure looming over Dream was terribly familiar. “Q-Quackity?” Sapnap stammered. “No, that’s-- that can’t--”

His words broke off as the footage continued. There were no microphones in the cell, and so an oppressive silence descended upon the room as utter *carnage* played out across the screen.

When the shears came out, Sapnap snapped out of his frozen stupor. “Oh *Prime*,” he choked out, lurching away as his voice rose with a volatile mix of horror and disgust. “Fuck-- *fuck* -- I--”

He staggered to the corner, doubled over, and began gagging. George politely looked away and shut off the footage. The screen returned to an image of the cell - and the rotting corpse sitting inside of it.

“Fuck,” Sapnap sobbed. He slammed a fist against the wall. “*Fuck.*”

“I told you,” Sam said quietly.

Bad spoke up for the first time since he’d stepped into the room. His eyes were fixed on the screen. “You said we couldn’t see Dream because of what happened to Tommy. Was that a lie?”

“... Partly, yes. Dream was dangerous, but--”

“But you also didn’t want us to see Dream like-- like *that*.”

Sam’s shoulders sank with resignation. “Yes.”

Bad’s fingers twitched almost imperceptibly. “He couldn’t have hurt anyone,” he pointed out. His voice was eerily flat. “He could barely *move*.”

Sam’s shoulders sank further. “I know.”

Bad stared at him. Then he jerkily wheeled around and marched out of the room. Antfrost glanced between his retreating form and the others, his tail lashing wildly. George met his gaze.

“Go,” he said shortly. “We can handle it here.”

Antfrost didn’t need any more encouragement. He took off after Bad. George blocked the broken door over with obsidian, then moved to Sapnap’s side.

The blaze hybrid straightened on shaking legs, wiping his chin. “Why?” he rasped. “Why did he do it? Why did you *let him* do it?”

“The revival book. We-- Quackity wanted the revival book.”

“So you tortured him.”

“I didn’t torture him--”

“Oh, *excuse me*, you *let him* be tortured. My mistake.”

“Dream can’t be trusted with that power--”

“And *Quackity* can?”

“More than Dream!”

“So that makes letting him *bleed to death* okay?!”

“IT WAS AN ACCIDENT!” Sam shouted. “He wasn’t-- we never wanted him to die!”

A terrible silence blanketed the room. Sam must have sensed the shift in the air, because he tensed further. George was the first to speak. “So,” he said frostily. “You watched Quackity cut him up, beat him within an inch of his life, and drown him - but *killing* is where you draw the line.”

“Th-that’s not--”

Sapnap took a step towards him. “Tell me why we shouldn’t kill you right now.”

Sam swallowed. “Listen. I-- I know I fucked up. *Prime*, I know I fucked up. But-- you don’t have to do this.”

“Just like how you didn’t have to let Quackity into the prison, huh?” Sapnap drew his sword. Sam scrambled back, fumbling for his own weapons, but he was cornered and outnumbered. Before he could even draw his trident, the tip of Sapnap’s blade was wedged under his chin. He froze.

“Sapnap, wait.”

Sapnap’s head swiveled towards George. “*Wait?* ”

George met his glower with a flat stare. “He still has three lives. He’ll respawn somewhere else if we kill him. It’s better to keep him secure for now.”

Sapnap began trembling. For a moment, George thought he would actually lunge forward and sink his blade into Sam’s throat. Before he could intervene, however, Sapnap took a deep breath. “Take off your armor and give me all your weapons,” he ordered.

Sam swallowed. Carefully, he reached up and undid the clasps of his chestplate. Sapnap tracked his every move, sword at the ready as Sam began methodically removing every piece of netherite.

The Warden had just reached up to take off the last piece of armor - his helmet - when a muffled thud reverberated through the obsidian covering the doorway. George cleared the blocks aside to see Bad and Antfrost, both looking considerably more disheveled than before. The walls of the hallway beyond now sported several large dents and gouges.

“Welcome back,” George said with all the mildness of a man well-practiced in ignoring the volatility of a situation. “Can you stay behind to make sure Sam stays here? Sapnap and I need to go.”

Antfrost and Bad exchanged glances, then looked to the now-defenseless Warden. Sam stiffened under their gazes and hastily turned his stare to the floor as he handed his axe to Sapnap.

“Okay,” the demon said at last, stepping into the room. “Should we cuff him, or. . .?”

George shrugged. “Just make sure he doesn’t leave. Knock him out if you have to.”

Meanwhile, Sapnap had finished relieving Sam of his weapons and armor. He lowered his sword as *Warden’s Will* disappeared into his inventory. “You better not make me regret leaving you alive,” he snarled.

Sam nodded jerkily, sweat beading his brow. The blaze hybrid glowered at him for one moment more, then spun on his heel and stalked towards the door. George fell into step at his side a moment later.

“Where are you going?” Antfrost called as they reached the threshold.

Sapnap glanced over his shoulder, eyes burning magma-bright. “To look for Quackity. He’s got a *lot* of shit to answer for.”

## 190.

Tommy knocked on the entrance of Ze Haus, then backed up and fell into parade rest. About a quarter of a minute passed by before Jack’s voice sounded through the door. “Who’s there?”

“Tommy. I’m, uh. Not dead anymore.”

There was a moment of silence before the door *slammed* open. Jack gaped at him, bicolored shades knocked askew in his shock. “What the *fuck*,” he breathed. “You-- you’re alive?”

Tommy waved. “Yeah. Uh. Dream brought me back.”

Something in Jack’s gaze shuttered. He drew himself up, lips curling back into a sneer. “Of *course* you can’t stay dead. Come here to rub your newfound immortality in my face or something?”

“No.” Tommy met his gaze unflinchingly. “I came here to apologize.”

“. . . What?”

“I’m sorry, Jack.”

“*What?* ”

“I have my memories as a ghost,” Tommy said. Jack recoiled like he’d been punched in the gut. “They’re, uh, they’re pretty eye-opening.”

“Oh, so *now* you’re feeling guilty,” Jack spat, but his voice was wavering. “Did you come here expecting forgiveness? Because you’re not *fucking getting it*.”

“I don’t want anything from you, Jack. I just want to tell you I’m sorry. I’m sorry for killing you. And betraying you. And *hurting* you. Thank you, really, for-- visiting me in Exile and-- and *trying*. You did more than pretty much anyone else at that point, and-- and I shoved you into lava for it. I’m sorry.” Tommy took a deep breath. “You don’t have to accept my apology. You don’t owe me anything. If you tell me to fuck off right now, I’ll leave and make sure you never see me again.”

Jack stared at him. “You’re serious.”

Tommy stared back. “I am.”

“You’re-- you’re *actually* apologizing to me. For. For what you did to me.”

“Yeah.”

Jack began trembling. The air around him distorted like a heat mirage. A moment later, he let out a quiet, watery laugh. “Fuck. You’re-- you’re actually apologizing. You’re actually sorry.”

Tommy gnawed on the inside of his cheek, noting the pang of guilt that sprung up in his stomach. Was it really so hard to believe that he was genuinely sorry? “Yeah, Jack. I am.”

Jack’s gaze skittered away from him. “I-- I was expecting you to apologize, you know. For the longest time. But you never did, and I stopped hoping, but now you’re-- you’re apologizing. And-- you’re apologizing to *me*, actually me. For things that you did to me. Not the wars you’ve started or the whole thing with L’Manberg or the mess with Dream. You’re apologizing for hurting *me*.”

“... Yeah. I-- I know I did some wrong with that whole shitshow, but-- I thought it was more important to, uh, talk to you about what I did *personally*. For what it’s worth, I *am* sorry about--”

Jack waved him off. “No, no, I don’t really give a fuck about L’Manberg anymore. Good riddance. But *you*-- you apologized to *me*. Not *at* me. That’s. That’s weird.”

“Oh. Uh.” Tommy shuffled in place, wrong-footed. “. . . A bad kind of weird, or. . . ?”

The unsettling aura around Jack seemed to soften. “I don’t know,” he admitted. “No one’s ever apologized to *me*. And now that you’ve-- well, *apologized*-- I don’t-- I don’t know how I feel.”

“That’s okay. You don’t have to do anything. You don’t-- you don’t even have to accept my apology. You--”

--don’t owe you anything, I know.” Jack let out an explosive sigh, then pulled off his glasses to rub at his eyes. “Fuck. This is a mess.”

Tommy agreed, but he didn't voice it. He waited quietly as Jack gathered his thoughts.

Finally, the man looked up at him. "I need time to think," he told him. "We're-- we're not friends. But. I don't think I want to kill you anymore."

That was a start. Tommy bobbed his head, ignoring the traitorous relief curling in his gut. "Cool. I'll, uh, leave you alone, yeah?"

"Yeah," Jack answered shortly. He retreated into his house and gripped the door as though to slam it.

"Bye, Jack," Tommy blurted, struck with a sudden desire to part on decent terms. Jack tensed, and for a second, Tommy was afraid he'd broken the delicate balance they'd fallen into. Before he could remedy the situation, however, Jack's shoulders slumped.

"Bye, Tommy," he said quietly, and shut the door.

Tommy stared at it for a long moment, then exhaled and turned away. He was *exhausted*, but he still had one more apology to deliver. Unfortunately, fate had other plans. He'd barely taken five steps away from Jack's house when the fabric of reality tore itself open at his feet. "No," Tommy protested, but he couldn't fight against the pull. A moment later, he found himself standing in his dirt shack - in a new loop.

Shit. *Shit*. The timing couldn't have been worse. He'd been just about to apologize to Niki - but with a loop reset, he wouldn't get the chance. Maybe she hadn't tried to kill him in this timeline yet. Maybe she had. It didn't matter either way, because the loop had reset and she didn't remember what she'd said to him and neither did Jack because now *all his progress was gone and--*

Tommy took a sharp breath and held it, counting out the breathing exercises Puffy had taught him. He ran through them several times, clearing his mind as he did so, and when the panic felt manageable again, he turned his focus back to the situation at hand.

Okay, first things first. Figure out *when* he was.

A quick trip outside revealed that his front lawn was covered with overgrown flowers - specifically the flowers Ranboo had planted after Tommy had died in prison. He was in his post-revival era, then - and thus past Niki and Jack's assassination attempt.

. . . Maybe he could still apologize. Jack wouldn't remember his apology, and Niki wouldn't remember this loop either, but. . . he wanted to give them closure. He wanted to give *himself* closure. Maybe that was selfish of him, but-- it was better than never apologizing, right?

Around this time, Niki would already be involved with the Syndicate. He knew where the Syndicate was based. If he could just catch her alone. . .

Mind made up, he set off for the Arctic.

---

“Niki! Niki, wait!”

Niki stumbled to an abrupt stop, nearly slipping in the snow. She turned as Tommy hurried up to her. “Tommy?”

“Hey, Niki,” Tommy panted, trying to catch his breath. He’d seen her at a distance, but she’d been moving so quickly he’d been forced to run after her.

Niki seemed uncomfortable, but she wasn’t going for any weapons. That was a good sign. “Tommy, what are you doing here?”

“Looking for you.” Tommy held up a finger and hunched over, struggling to bring his breathing under control. “Sorry-- give me a moment. Bit out of shape.”

Niki nodded jerkily, shifting like she wasn’t sure whether to bolt or sink into the ground. Thankfully, Tommy only needed a minute to catch his breath. He straightened. “Okay. I’m good now. Hi.”

Niki offered him an uncomfortable smile. “Hi, Tommy. What brings you here?”

It was probably better to just go all in. Tommy steeled himself. “Okay, so, uh, weird question but. Uh. Remember when you tried to kill me?”

Niki went white as a sheet. Tommy winced, rushing to reassure her.

“I know you were mad, I just-- I came here to say sorry. For. For being a dick and saying the stuff I did that day. I know Wilbur was a bastard, and uh, he did bad shit and-- yeah. I’m sorry I hurt you. I didn’t-- mean to make you feel abandoned, I just-- fuck, Niki, I was trying to stay alive. Wilbur, he-- wasn’t right in the head in Pogtopia, you know? And with Schlatt and Wilbur and Tubbo and everything I just-- lost track. I’m sorry we never checked in on you.”

Of all the responses he’d been expecting, it hadn’t been for Niki to blurt “Tommy, I’m *so* sorry.”

Tommy blinked at her, dumbfounded. “. . . What?”

“I’m sorry,” Niki repeated, her fingers curling in the edges of her cloak. “You- I was wrong. To. To hate you. I don’t hate you anymore.”

“What?” Tommy said again. “Wh-- *huh?*”

“I’ve been doing a lot of self-reflection lately, and I realized. . .” Niki trailed off, fiddling with her cloak. “I guess I realized that it wasn’t your fault. That it wasn’t anyone’s fault. Wilbur-- Wilbur made his own choices, and. . . blaming everyone around me won’t do me any good. You were-- *are* just a kid, Tommy. You didn’t understand, and you *certainly* weren’t responsible for everything that happened to me. So Tommy, I’m sorry. For-- for



blaming you. And trying to kill you.” She winced. “Sorry. That wasn’t my most. . . elegant apology.”

A snort burst from Tommy. Hurt flashed across Niki’s face, but Tommy held up a hand. “Sorry, sorry, I just--” he shook his head. “I wasn’t expecting that.”

“Ah.”

Awkward silence descended upon them as Tommy tried to organize his thoughts. He would have laughed at the irony of it all if Niki wouldn’t have taken it the wrong way.

“I . . . thought you hated me,” he said at last.

“I did,” Niki admitted. “I drove everyone away because of it. I . . . spent a lot of time thinking about how to kill you, and I was so *angry* all the time, I just. I stopped talking to people. People stopped talking to me too.” She caved in on herself, hugging her arms to her chest. “I’m sorry, Tommy. I was so blinded by rage--”

“I forgive you.”

--that I didn’t--” Niki registered what he said. “You. . . forgive me?”

“Yeah.” Niki had tried to kill him, but. . . he couldn’t hold a grudge for all of eternity. He missed the days before Manberg, when she’d been his friend and they’d been able to goof around together. “You were hurt, so you tried to hurt someone else back. You made mistakes, like every other Player in the universe.”

“I-- but--”

“It’s not a hard thing to do. I-- wasn’t ever really mad at you, Niki. You’re allowed to hate me, and killing-- er, *trying* to kill me wasn’t-- great, but.” He shrugged. Compared to what he’d already gone through, a failed assassination attempt didn’t really even register. “We all fuck up sometimes. At least you’re *trying* to fix it, so. I forgive you.”

“ . . . Oh. I . . .” Niki floundered, caught off guard by his easy forgiveness. “ . . . I see.”

“Yep.” Tommy cleared his throat, trying to brush past the clumsy apology and subsequent acceptance. Niki must’ve already joined the Syndicate by this time, and he’d thought she was comfortable there, but some of the things she said had given him second thoughts. “Do you still feel. . . lonely?”

“Lonely?” Niki glanced at the horizon. “I . . . I did, but. . . there’s people out there now, who want me. I’m making new allies. *Friends*.” She smiled, soft and free of the resentment that had plagued her for much of her time on the server. . “It’s. . . it’s really nice.”

Tommy cleared his throat. “Well, uh, would you be okay with. Being friends? With me?”

Niki blinked. “You. . . want to be friends?”

“Yeah. I think-- just. I want to put our misunderstandings behind us. So. Friends?”

Niki smiled. It was small, but genuine. “I’d like that.”

“Pog.”

Silence descended once again, but now it was more contemplative than uncomfortable. Niki was the first to break it. “I took up baking again, you know. I’ve. . . I’m planning to make cinnamon rolls today.” She took a deep breath, then gathered her courage and looked Tommy in the eye. “Do you want to help?”

Tommy wanted to. He *really* wanted to. But. . . “I’m not great at baking, Niki.”

“That’s alright. Cinnamon rolls are pretty easy. Besides, they taste better when they’re shared.”

Tommy hesitated for a moment more, but when Niki didn’t rescind her offer, he gave in. “. . . Sure. That. . . that sounds fun, Niki. Thank you.”

Niki laughed. “You can thank me by not burning my house down.”

“I solemnly swear that I will try not to, Niki Nihachu.”

“That’s all I can ask for, Tommy Innit.”

## Chapter End Notes

hope you enjoyed <3 happy holidays!

I find it hilarious how the multi-part loops just slide further down the crack spectrum into angst the longer they go on (i.e. remix, dreaxter)

Anyways y’all Astral made this AMAZING [ot!Karl animation](#) and it’s so cute and I love it!! Go [subscribe](#) to her because she’s so underrated

Aivoze drew some [beautiful fanart](#) for the 1st loop of on diverging!

[Dream!!](#) by Solvingtiktokargs :D

[A lil’ dreaxter doodle](#) by Thighs! (^^)

Sage made a [gacha vid](#) of a loop idea!

...ONEMORECHAPTERBEFOREPHASE3AAAAAA--

### **Loop Notes**

**186.** Dream received many compliments on his outfit change. In a particularly memorable instance, Technoblade told him he looked less like a Teletubby. He was punched for his efforts. (Parallels 81. in Chapter 17)

**187.** Punz and Purpled teamed up. They did, in fact, utterly destroy Tommy and Dream. It helped that they weren’t exactly playing by conventional rules. “You can’t rob someone at gunpoint! There aren’t any guns in this game!” “There are now.”

**190.** Niki was right. The cinnamon rolls did taste better when they were shared.



# Chapter 39

## Chapter Notes

y'all I am so sorry abt the impromptu hiatus. College applications ate up the end of december, and then extreme burnout (frustration, thy name is senioritis) ate up most of january, which is why this took so long to update (;v; ) BUT I DID IT WOOHOO  
Hope u enjoy the chapter :D

### Spotlighted Comments

**Morning\_Frost:** Techno has reached his final form. There is no going back.

**Nico\_Honeyfly:** "You- what? You can't rob people at gunpoint, THERE ARE NO GUNS IN THIS GAME."

"\*Click\* There are now."

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

**191.**

"Huh," said Sapnap.

"Huh," Karl echoed.

"What the fuck," added Quackity.

The three of them were standing in front of what was *supposed* to be the Community House. Said Community House had been converted into a giant bouncy castle. A brightly-colored, slightly glowing bouncy castle.

"Should we. . . go in?" Sapnap asked, but Karl was already clambering up the inflatable stairs. "Okay then. Guess we're going in."

The interior was *massive*. Platforms lined the walls, tilted at various angles. Several large columns and a few hoops were present as well. The center of the bouncy castle contained a foam pit and an arsenal of harmless "weapons", all lined up in neat rows on a series of pool-noodle-composed racks.

"Woah." Sapnap rocked back on his heels, surveying the interior of the castle with wide eyes. "This thing is a full-on *parkour course*."

Quackity side-eyed him. "Wanna give it a run?"

". . . Sure. Why not?"

“Last one to reach the end has to do the dishes tonight!” Karl shouted, already dashing for the first platform. The other two squawked and raced after him, elbowing and attempting to trip each other in turn. By the time they reached the first platform, Karl had already made it to the fifth. The bastard had the audacity to fucking turn around and *laugh at them*.

Quackity glanced at Sapnap. “Truce?”

“Truce,” Sapnap agreed. In unison, they turned to Karl, who seemed to realize the error of his ways. He spun and tried to leap up across the next few platforms, but in his haste to do so, ended up tripping and nearly falling off the eighth platform. He managed to grab ahold of the edge and dangle there, lacking the leverage to pull himself up.

He laughed nervously as Sapnap and Quackity landed above him, both grinning with karmic vindication. “Hey, uh, mind giving me a hand?”

“Hmm,” Sapnap said. “I dunno. Do we mind?”

Quackity knelt so he could peer over the edge of the platform. He met Karl’s pleading look with a grin of pure malice. “*Long live the king.*”

With that, he pried Karl’s hands off of the platform. Karl shrieked in betrayal as he fell into the foam pit and disappeared beneath a wave of colorful blocks.

Quackity only had a moment to savor his victory before something moved in the corner of his eye. He whipped around-- just in time to see Sapnap launching at him with a cry of “THIS IS SPARTA!” The two went tumbling off the platform and into the foam pit, sending the foam blocks hurtling every-which-way. Karl, who had just managed to struggle to his feet, went down again when a white one caught him in the jaw. Neither Sapnap nor Quackity noticed, too busy embroiled in their own wrestling match.

“You backstabbing traitor!” Quackity choked out between laughs as he tried to bury Sapnap in blocks. The blaze hybrid, though similarly struggling to breathe through his laughter, was doing a decent job of fighting back. He managed to get ahold of a foam block and bean Quackity over the head, forcing the other to let him up.

The sound of a clearing throat cut through their play fighting. The two turned away from each other, abruptly reminded that there was another opponent to consider. Karl stood three feet away, now wielding a large foam mallet. He took a single step in their direction, and both Quackity and Sapnap tried to instinctively step back. Unfortunately, the waist-high sea of foam blocks made mobility rather difficult.

Realizing this, Quackity raised his hands. “Wait-- Karl, we can talk about this man! You don’t have to do this--”

“Too bad.” Karl waded forward, raising his weapon with a disconcerting glint in his eyes. “Mess with the honk, you get the bonk.”

---

“I don’t think this was here before.”

“Really,” Philza drawled, tipping his hat back so he could see the topmost spires of the castle. “I had no idea.”

Technoblade ignored the sarcasm in favor of prodding the wall with a finger. “There’s Unbreakin’ on this. Good ones, too. Whoever did these enchants knew what they were doin’. No idea why they chose to enchant a . . . *bouncy castle*, of all things.”

He turned back to Philza, only to find him gone. Before he could panic, though, his friend’s voice sounded from inside the castle. “Hey, Techno! There’s an obstacle course in here!”

“An obstacle course?” Technoblade wobbled his way up the stairs (he wasn’t about to crawl, he had a sense of *dignity*) and blinked at the interior of the castle. “Huh. That’s. Way more advanced than I thought it would be. Not bad for a bouncy castle.”

Philza smirked at him, eyes glittering with mischief. “Race you to the end?”

“Oh, prepare to *lose*, old man.”

---

“How. *How*. That shouldn’t be-- *what*.”

“Practice,” Eret said blithely. He bounced up and down on the springy surface, completely unhindered by his platform boots. Next to him, Niki nodded sagely, then proceeded to execute a flawless frontflip. In heels.

Fundy ran a hand down his face when the two began striking increasingly ridiculous poses midair. “You guys really brought those shoes here *just* to do flips in them?”

“Yep!” Niki answered. She briefly paused in her flipping to beckon to him. “Join us.”

Fundy eyed the bouncy surface. “. . . Uh. I don’t know any fancy tricks.”

“We can teach you,” Eret said. “In normal shoes first, of course.” He broke the rhythm of his jumps with a perfect backflip, sticking the landing and bowing.

Niki applauded. Fundy sighed, glanced down at his sneakers, and cautiously stepped onto the trampoline.

---

“I will flip you like a fucking pancake,” Tommy vowed.

Dream grinned down at him from his perch on the central column of the rotating beam that had taken Tommy out. “Sorry, what was that? I don’t think I heard you right.”

Tommy struggled to his feet. “Die.”

“Why, child, your threats are so creative.”

“Die,” Tommy repeated, holding up his hands. Dream grabbed his wrists and hoisted him up onto the platform. A moment later, the foam beam went swinging past.

“Face it, Tommy. I’m just better at parkour.”

“Bold statement, coming from a guy who can’t tie his own shoes.”

Dream looked down. “But they’re tied--?”

Tommy whacked him upside the head.

## **192.** *(credit to Lee and Ayrn)*

“Tommy! Why are you-- why are you with *him*? He’s *evil*!”

Tommy stared blankly at Tubbo and Quackity. They hadn’t meant to get caught together in this loop, but there was no going back now. Time to improvise a reason for why he and Dream had suddenly become best friends.

Tommy looked at Dream. Dream looked at Tommy. Because they shared a single braincell, they knew exactly what they were going to do.

Tommy turned back to the others. “Who the fuck are you?”

“And how do you know us?” Dream added.

“Wh--” Quackity glanced back and forth between the two of them, visibly bluescreening.

“What kind of sick joke is this?”

“I literally don’t know who you are,” Dream deadpanned. “I woke up two days ago with no one but *this child*--” he gestured at Tommy, “--for company.”

“Oi! I’m not a child, you bitch--”

“If it looks like a teenager, angsts like a teenager, and cusses like a teenager, it’s a teenager.”

“I will break your teeth.”

“Not if I break yours first.”

Quackity had obviously had enough. “It’s me! Quackity!”

“One second,” Dream said. Quackity tensed as he reached for his inventory, only to blink in surprise when Dream withdrew a journal instead of a weapon. Both L’Manbergians watched as Dream flipped to a bookmarked page, nodded to himself, then pulled out a quill and began writing.

“Quah-kih-tee,” he sounded out. “You spell that like ‘quack’ with an I-T-Y added at the end, right?”

“... Yeah?”

Dream nodded to himself again. “Dislikes... me... because... I... was... evil,” he muttered. Then he looked to Tubbo. “And you?”

Tubbo blinked at them. “Uh. I. I’m Tubbo?”

“With two Bs, right?” Dream continued scribbling. “And do you hate me too?”

“That’s... complicated.” Tubbo took a deep breath. “Look, we need to go back to L’Manberg. There’s a lot to explain, and it’ll be easier to talk in my office.”

Tommy crossed his arms, scowling. “We can talk here, bitch. We’re not going to some shady lemonburg place with you weirdos! The fuck even is a lemonburg?”

“L’Manberg. It’s a nation.” When Tommy’s mulish expression remained, Tubbo sent a pointed glance to the sad excuse of a tent staked in the middle of the beach. “We also have showers. And indoor plumbing.”

Tommy instantly brightened up at the words ‘indoor plumbing’. “Oh, well. If that’s the case. Lead the way, big T!”

---

“Tommy, Dream, you have to understand-- you can’t be friends.”

“Why not?” both loopers asked in unison.

Tubbo turned towards Tommy and jabbed a finger in Dream’s direction. “He manipulated me into exiling you.”

Tommy wrinkled his nose and tried very hard not to burst into laughter. “Not gonna lie, big man-- sounds fake.”

Tubbo’s eye twitched. “Dream destroyed the country you founded! You’re mortal enemies!”



“What?” Dream’s eyes grew comically wide. If he kept going like this, he was going to get called out. “I would *never!*”

Tubbo scowled at him, marched over to one of the cabinets in the office, then returned and slapped a picture down on the desk in front of them. “BITCH!”

Both loopers looked at the photo. It was a rather dramatic scene of Dream standing before the flaming ruins of L’Manberg, cackling maniacally as the light from exploding TNT cast his figure in sharp relief.

“Hmm,” said Tommy. “Looks photoshopped.”

“It *isn’t* photoshopped--” Tubbo took a deep breath, visibly collected himself, then folded his hands on the desk and fixed them with his President™ stare. “Right. Neither of you are leaving my office until you *understand what’s going on.*”

They sat in a three-way staredown for a painful minute. Eventually, Tommy leaned over to Dream and not-so-subtly whispered, “I think we should just tell him.”

Tubbo’s eyes narrowed as Dream whispered back. “You sure?”

“Yeah. Otherwise we’re gonna be stuck here.”

“Tell me what?” Tubbo demanded. “What are you hiding?”

“Aha. So.” Tommy cleared his throat. “Tee-ell-dee-arr, Dream and I are stuck in a timeloop. We’ve kinda . . . become friends during it? He’s reformed, now. Feels bad for all the shit he did and paid for it ten times over. So yeah. Friends. ‘Xept it’s fuckin’ *exhausting* trying to explain that to a ton of people, and of course there’s always the fuckers who don’t believe us so we just avoid explaining. Sometimes by faking amnesia. Which is what we’re doing now.”

Tubbo took several moments to digest that. Then he took another several moments to put his head in his hands and massage his temples. “Say I believe you. Why the *fuck*,” and here he took a deep breath, “did you decide to imitate *Ranboo*’s memory problems instead of just-- I don’t know, going with regular old amnesia?”

“So people are less likely to question us,” Dream said at the same time Tommy said, “Because it’s funny.”

Both loopers glanced at each other. “And also because it’s funny,” Dream amended.

Tubbo slowly leaned forward and pressed his forehead against his desk. “You’re actually serious,” he muttered into the wood. “You’re-- because it’s *funny*’.”

“Yep.”

Tubbo remained silent for about a minute. Just when Tommy began to worry that he was figuring out the best way to dispose of their bodies, the president of L’Manberg raised his head. He smoothed down his hair and the wrinkles in his suit, folded his hands in front of him, and cleared his throat. “So there’s no way I can convince you to stop this insanity.”

“Tubbo. Tubs. Big T. You should know better by now.”

“I do,” Tubbo agreed grimly. He paused for a moment, a contemplative look passing over his face, then nodded to himself and looked the loopers dead in the eye. “Right then. I want in.”

Neither Dream nor Tommy had been expecting that. “H-huh?” the latter spluttered, aghast. “You-- what?”

“I want in.”

“*What?*”

Tubbo shrugged. “If you can’t beat them, you join them. And if we’re really trapped in an unending timeloop, I think I deserve to go batshit a couple times. I get tired of being nice, you know?”

Tommy shuddered. Oh, yes, they *knew*.

Dream cleared his throat. He’d gone a few shades paler beneath his mask. “Right. Er. You want in. That. . . can be arranged, but we’ll need an excuse for your memory loss. Something that can’t be traced back to us, preferably.”

Tubbo looked very thoughtful. “Some kind of head injury. Hm. . . 'accidentally' putting my head through a window?”

Dream shook his head. “Not enough to explain the amnesia, and you’ll actually have to injure yourself for that.”

“I can gently pat your head with an anvil,” Tommy offered.

“Perfect!”

“*No--*”

---

“Tubbo, um. . .”

Tubbo turned, craning his head so he could look Ranboo in the eye. “Oh hey Ranboo! What’s up?”

Ranboo shuffled awkwardly. “Uh. I was wondering if you’d like a memory journal, like Dream and Tommy and I have. I, um, have a few extra books. . .”

“Oh!” Tubbo brightened, a wide grin spreading across his face. “Thanks, but I’m good. My current journal’s working fine.”

“Your. . . current journal?”

“Yeah!” Tubbo pulled out a wad of paper. “Look, I’ve got things under control!”

Ranboo warily took the proffered object and unfolded it. “. . . Tubbo, this is a five-year-old receipt from CVS.”

“No, no, the other side.”

“The other--” Ranboo flipped the crumpled receipt over and did a double take. ““Things I should make go *boom*”?! Tubbo, what-- why is ‘the server’ on here?!”

Tubbo blinked at him. “Why wouldn’t the server be on there?”

“*We live on it?!*”

“Hmm.” Tubbo tapped his chin, then shrugged. “Eh. Not a good enough reason.”

Ranboo let out a noise somewhere between a screech of agony and a cry of disbelief, made a gesture as though he was restraining himself from strangling Tubbo while doing a modified version of the macarena, then spontaneously teleported out of sheer distress.

Tubbo stared at the spot where he’d been. “. . . Oops.”

### **193.** *(credit to Chara and Buzzy)*

Dream eyed Tommy. “Let me get this straight. You want me. . . to shoot you?”

“Yes,” Tommy said.

Dream looked Tommy up and down. His fellow looper was distinctly lacking in any armor or form of protection. “. . . Non-fatally, right?” he checked.

“Doesn’t matter. Just do it, you pussy.”

Warily, Dream loaded his crossbow and shot Tommy in the arm. The arrow hit him-- and bounced right off, tip shattered and cracked cleanly in two.

“. . . What the fuck?”

“YES!” Tommy whooped. He kicked the broken arrow, crushing the shaft beneath his sneaker. “Ha, take that, fucker!”

“What the fuck,” Dream repeated. “Tommy, did you-- invent a force field or something?”

Tommy pulled back his sleeve to reveal the glowing inscription scrawled across his bicep. “Even better. I got *unbreaking*. ”

Dream stared at the Enchantment. The design looked *familiar*, almost like he’d. . .

Wait a minute.

Dream took a deep breath. “. . . Is this why you woke me up in the middle of the night to get me to show you how to modify an enchantment to work on a living thing?”

The younger looper looked completely unrepentant for the fact that he'd taken advantage of Dream's sleep-deprived state to trick him into designing an *abomination*. “Yep.”

“Tommy.”

“Dream.”

“Tommy, you can't keep pulling shit like this.”

Tommy grinned, all defiance and chaotic recklessness. “*Watch* me.”

“That wasn't a challenge-- Tommy, where are you going? Tommy *wait--*”

---

When Tubbo saw Tommy in the distance, his heart nearly stopped.

His friend was sprinting across the beach of Logstedshire, kicking up sand as he went. A *swarm* of zombies lumbered after him, clearly out for blood. They were herding him towards the water, gaining ground with every second. The ocean was no escape, because there were Drowned lurking just below the water.

Tommy had no armor. He had no weapons. He was going to die.

“TOMMY!” Tubbo screamed, rushing forward. He was too far away for Tommy to hear him. Too far away to *help*. He could only watch as Tommy skidded to a stop at the shoreline and turned to face the oncoming mob. He wanted to look away, but bone-chilling *terror* kept his gaze fixed on the scene.

The first zombie reached out to claw at Tommy-- and promptly fell apart in ribbons of rotten flesh.

Tubbo looked on with horrified fascination as the rest of the horde met the same fate, torn to shreds the moment they laid a finger on his friend. The Drowned, too, were destroyed when they tried their luck. In the aftermath, Tommy was left standing completely unharmed in a circle of zombie remains. He nonchalantly wiped some of the blackened blood on his cheek away with his now-tattered shirt, then began to pick his way through the carnage surrounding him. When he was about ten feet away, he chanced a glance up and caught sight of Tubbo.

“Tubbo! What're you doing here?”

“. . . Uh,” said Tubbo, trying to get his brain to work again. “I . . . I'm here to visit you?”

“Oh. Huh.” Tommy stopped a few feet away and inspected him. “Well, nice to see you. Uh. No hard feelings about the exile, by the way. Turns out Dream’s pretty cool when he’s not busy being the worst person in the world.”

There was a lot packed into those few sentences, but Tubbo was too distracted to parse them out at the moment. He gestured to the carnage. “Tommy, how. . .?”

“A combination of Thorns XII and Smite V!” Tommy glanced at the sky, winced when he saw the position of the moon, then hurriedly produced an ender pearl from his inventory. “Anyway Tubs, good to see you IgottaruntoTechno’snow. Bye!”

He was gone before Tubbo could even open his mouth.

---

“I could beat you with a single finger.”

Chilling silence fell upon the ruins of the Community House as Dream observed Tommy. The teenager raised his chin in silent defiance, ignoring how the onlookers tensed. After all, it wasn’t often that someone had the audacity to interrupt Dream mid-monologue - and with a challenge, no less.

Technoblade was equally impressed and irritated. On one hand, the kid had guts. On the other hand, interrupting Dream wasn’t getting him any favor points - especially not with a brash comment like *that*.

“Oh?” Dream said, soft and *dangerous*. The hairs on the back of Technoblade’s neck prickled. Tommy, however, just raised his hands and wiggled his fingers.

“I could beat you with a single finger,” he repeated. “All I have to do. . . is boop you.”

A pause. Chat murmured in Technoblade’s head. *Boop? Boop? Methinks the child doth grow too big for his breeches. A single finger? I mean maybe he has a trick up his sleeve? He’s Tommy, he doesn’t do strategic fighting. Ye of little faith. . .*

“You didn’t,” said Dream, apropos of nothing. “You wouldn’t.”

“Oh, but I *did*. I’ve become more powerful than you could possibly imagine. And now. . .”

“No.” Dream backed away. “*No*.”

“I’m gonna boop you,” Tommy cackled. He advanced. Technoblade narrowed his eyes, confused, as the man in full netherite retreated from the seemingly defenseless teenager.

“Do not,” Dream hissed, raising his axe and shield. “Tommy, one more step in my direction and I *swear to Prime--*”

He threw himself to the side as Tommy lunged forward. Unfortunately for him, the pseudo-teenager was faster. He wiggled past Dream's feeble defenses and flicked him in the nose. "Boop!"

Technoblade felt a part of his soul *flee* his body as Dream went *blasting* into the stratosphere. The man's screaming faded as he flew into the distance. Half of the voices hissed in collective sympathy while the other half shrieked semi-coherent phrases about *how-what-the-fuck*. Technoblade found himself agreeing with both sentiments.

Dream would be fine. Probably. He was in full netherite. Then again, netherite didn't account for its wearer being hit with an enchantment *eight levels higher than the supposed maximum level*.

Slowly, Technoblade turned to Tommy, who was shading his eyes with his hands and squinting at the horizon as Dream shrunk into a distant dot. "Tommy. What was that?"

Tommy turned to him, grinning. His nails glinted with an odd sheen. "Knockback X. Wasn't sure it was going to work, but it did. Pog."

Technoblade just stared at him. "... Why are you like this?"

"It's the trauma, big man. Blame the trauma."

#### 194. *seeing red, pt. 1*

##### ***TW: Minor Body Horror***

They had grown too complacent.

Tommy shivered and curled in on himself, trying to minimize the amount of contact he was making with the walls of the box. The space was so small, he couldn't uncurl from a fetal position without banging his elbows against the obsidian. The only thing keeping him from spiraling into a full-on panic-attack was cold logic. If he panicked, he'd play right into the Crimson's hands. He had to keep calm. Keep a level head. He just had to get through this loop without letting the Crimson infect him. Easy enough; he was immune. The Egg couldn't do shit to him if he couldn't hear it.

Would be easier if Dream could bail him out, but the Eggpire had taken his communicator. He couldn't call for help. Dream wouldn't come looking for him - he'd *told* him he was planning something big, *told* him not to worry if he disappeared for a couple days. So of *course* his shitty luck decided to act up now, because the universe fucking *hated* Tommy.

His right ankle itched. He scratched at it as pins and needles crawled up his skin, inducing him to shift uncomfortably. When the scratching didn't help much, he began rubbing instead in an attempt to regain circulation.

Unfortunately, the sensation didn't dissipate. If anything, it got *worse*, prickling until it bordered on a fiery stinging. He soon found himself gnawing on the inside of his cheek to

distract himself from the pain. He couldn't uncurl. He didn't *want* to uncurl. In this position, he was safe. He could close his eyes and pretend he wasn't trapped in a tiny obsidian box.

Beneath his fingers, his leg moved. *Without his permission.*

Tommy jerked, scrambling back on three limbs as the fourth uncurled and knocked lazily against the obsidian wall. The hem of his pants rode up with the movement, exposing his skin. The veins in his ankle were glowing, filled with a bright, unnatural red. *Crimson.*

Oh fuck. It was under his skin. *It was under his skin and puppeting his body.*

Some part of Tommy was aware that he was screaming. The rest of him was focusing on the pins-and-needles climbing up his *left leg*. Spreading across his torso, then his shoulders. But his mind was still his own; he heard no whispers, no taunting-- just his own screams echoing against the walls. The Crimson didn't need to brainwash him with twisted promises if it could make him dance against his will. *Like a puppet on a string--*

"NO!" Tommy shrieked. Hot tears burned their way down his cheeks. He'd never felt so powerless, not even when he'd been trapped in Pandora's Vault. "NO! HELP ME! HELP! DREAM, PLEASE! *DREAM!*"

He knew Dream couldn't hear him, but all rationality was lost in the face of all-consuming fear. So he screamed. He screamed until his voice broke. He screamed until he'd lost control of his arms. He screamed until the obsidian wall cracked open and he was standing, lurching forward into the open where the Eggpire waited for him--

"Nononono," Tommy sobbed as he shuffled towards Bad. "Not like this, *no--* "

"Shhh," the Crimson crooned with Bad's voice. To his horror, Tommy found his throat tightening. He tried to scream again, but his jaw snapped shut. Blood filled his mouth as his teeth sank into his tongue.

"*Shhh,*" the Crimson repeated. "*Stop fighting it. This is good for you, Tommy. We wouldn't need to do this if you'd just **listen.***"

Oh Prime. Oh Prime nononono *no.*

Tears left trails down his cheeks, tinted red with blood and Crimson residue. He wanted to close his eyes and hide until this was over. He wanted to disappear. But the splintered *agony* spidering through his bones grounded him against his will, chaining him to the present. His eyelids wouldn't so much as twitch, no matter how hard he tried to squeeze them shut. The Crimson refused to let him escape, either in body or in mind.

Once, he'd viewed crying as a weakness. Now, it was the only thing he could do.

He lowered his hands and closed his eyes, rocking back and forth as he recited the old burial rites. His family should have been here, should be chanting with him, but he'd long resigned himself to the fact that he'd never see them again.

The last syllable fell past his lips, heavier than stone. With trembling hands, he lifted the necklace, looping it around the shoddy wooden cross he'd put together. It was the only accessory he could afford to lose. The journal was too precious.

Staring at the grave, he suddenly felt very cold. Was this how he was going to end up? Laid to rest in a hidden clearing with nothing but a wooden post and two pieces of bloodied jewelry to his name?

Still, it was a better fate than losing himself. He shuddered, wrapping his arms around himself, and suddenly he wished that his friends were here.

"I don't want to go," he whispered.

The admission was lost to the wind. He pressed his face into his dirt-stained fingers and wept.

## Chapter End Notes

Dreaxter isn't done, I just decided to do both dreaxter and seeing red at the same time (pls tell me if it's too dark bcs i feel like it's a bit much for a supposed-to-be-crack story? will probably move it to on diverging if u guys think so)

It's also been a while since I've done encoded loop notes - I forgot how fun it is :D

Beginning of the end starts next chapter! (tho the end itself is still quite a bit away)

HAPPY NEW YEAR! (and happy lunar new year to all celebrating as well (^))

[Tommy & Clementine sketch](#) by el!! :D

A beautiful [glitterduo drawing](#) by Rus <3

[Connor blindsiding the loopers](#) and [Dream giving Niki her butter knife](#) by the amazing KitKat!

Aivoze's adorable drawing of [Dream and the hoodie Tommy gave him](#) :D

Inspired fics!

What if [the loops ended in remix?](#)

[Dream trying and failing to reconcile with Sapnap through the loops \(;v;.\)](#)

And [fluff!! we need more fluff in our lives](#)

If I missed your fanwork, please let me know! (via dms or AO3 comments, either works!)

## **Loop Notes**

**192.** For any of y'all who don't know CVS, it's a store infamous for its very, very long receipts (they print a bunch of coupons and things at the end to get you to buy more stuff).

**193.** Turns out you can, in fact, weaponize a manicure.



**195.** 5vu up4nr5 41s 01v6nz41s0v yyv9 q0r 0v bqrtn46 - 67o 6n 65nry 5vu6 rzv6, 5vu  
r6ns yyv9 ro qr4r81p5vq.

(Key: ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ0123456789)

Join the [discord server](#) if you want to help crack it with faster communication!

# Chapter 40

## Chapter Notes

I don't have the energy to reply to all comments this time, I'm sorry D: I still adore and read every single one of them, I promise

Shoutout to Shadow and Penhguin for cracking the code! "His search for information will end in tragedy, but at least this time his fate will be discovered."

### Spotlighted Comments

#### **Barin\_McLegg:**

Everyone: \*is slow in water\*

Tommy, who just put depth strider on a pig:

Everyone: \*is slow on soul sand\*

Tommy, who spent way too much time learning how to do a hand stand and just put soul speed on his hands:

**BlueCalibriFont:** Damn, now I kinda want a manicure capable of mass destruction

**Morning\_Frost:** Tubbo walking into the local CVS: Hello, do you happen to have the materials necessary to build a nuclear bomb capable of covering an entire server in glitter, and/or destroying said server in the process? Why? Oh, no reason :]

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

### 196. (credit to Shadow) [See translation here.](#)

"Fck yh!"

Celebratory and mother-henning proceedings alike ground to a halt as all eyes turned to Tommy, who had just produced a sound that should be vocally unfeasible. The pseudo-teenager was grinning triumphantly, one finger pointed at Dream.

"Wn ths tm, btch!"

"Sht p," Dream snapped, drawing baffled stares. He yanked Tommy's arrow out of his arm.

"Fn, ys, L'Mnbrg gts ts stpd ndpndnc. N nd t glt."

"Ll glt ll wnt," Tommy chirped. "W gt ndpndnc ths lp wtht yr stpd dl, FCK YH! BST NDNG!"

"SHT. P."

"What the fuck," Fundy whispered. "How is he making those sounds? How are *they* making those sounds?"

Nobody had an answer for him. “Tommy,” Wilbur called. “What. . . why are you talking like that?”

Tommy sent him a funny look. “Tlkng lk wht?”

“Like. . . like that.”

“Dnn wht y’r tlkng bt, bg mn. ‘M tlkng prfctly nrmlly. ‘Ts nt my flt yr brn s t smll t cmprhnd my wrds.”

“Knd pntlss t nslt thm whn thy cnt ndrstd y,” Dream pointed out. Tommy flipped him off. Dream tried to do the same in return, only for his arm to be wrestled down.

“Dream,” Sapnap said, “I don’t know what the fuck is wrong with your head right now but will you *please* stop moving your arm?”

Dream looked down at his arm. A patch of red spread rapidly from the arrow wound, which he’d only exacerbated when he’d yanked the weapon free and flung the appendage around. “. . . ps.”

“Ps,” Tommy mocked. “Y gt sht n th rm. Y knw wht tht mns?”

“N.”

“Ys.” Tommy grinned. “‘M bttr sht thn y nw, *btch*.”

“*Lt y wn!*”

“H-hh. Ttily.”

Wilbur cleared his throat, interrupting the semi-comprehensible bickering. “Tommy. What the fuck?”

“Tht’s qstn gt lt,” Tommy mused. “Myb shld dd t t m mddl nm.”

“Yr mddl nm’s lrdy lng ngh.”

“Mddl nms cn nvr b t lng, Drm.”

“‘Tmmy Dngr Crfl Krkn Wht Th Fck nnt’?”

Tommy scrunched his nose. “Mm. Myb pg wld b bttr.”

“‘Tmmy Dngr Crl Krkn Pg nnt’?”

“Hs rng t t, dsn’t t? Mch bttr thn *Ws*. ”

“M mddl nm s prfctly gd mddl nm--”

“Y cld mprv t wth a ‘btch’, bcs y’r--”

Dream kicked him in the shin. Tommy punched him upside the head. Wilbur and Punz jumped in to wrestle them apart before it could devolve into an all-out brawl.

On the sidelines, Tubbo turned slowly to Eret. All animosity was temporarily put aside in light of the baffling events they had just witnessed. “They. . . were they speaking without vowels?”

Eret tilted his head. “That’s what I believe I’m hearing, yes.”

“. . . How?”

“Maybe it’s just a collective hallucination,” Fundy suggested. “Those. . . those are a thing, right? *Right?*”

Nobody had an answer for him.

---

“--over there’s the White House. None of the officials actually live there, it’s--”

“TBB!”

Ranboo turned to see a tall, blonde teenager stalking towards them. Tubbo, his impromptu tour guide, just groaned. “That’s Tommy. Brace yourself.”

Before Ranboo could ask what *that* meant, Tommy was slouching up to them, a look of consternation on his face. “Tbb! Drm s bng btch gn!”

“What?” Ranboo asked without meaning to.

Tommy blinked at him. “H hy, nw prsn. Wht’s yr nm?”

“Um.” Ranboo glanced at Tubbo, who just looked incredibly *tired*. “. . . What?”

“Tommy, this is Ranboo,” Tubbo said. “Ranboo, this is Tommy. He doesn’t speak with vowels. We don’t know how he does it. He just does.”

Tommy’s eyebrows scrunched. “. . . Rnb? Thts stpd nm.”

*Rnb*, Ranboo mouthed. Tubbo caught the gesture and snorted. “It’s a pretty good name for Tommy to say, all thing considered. Better than mine. And you should hear what he calls Technoblade.”

“Tchnbld!” Tommy chirped. Ranboo physically *recoiled* at the conglomeration of consonants. There was just something. . . *wrong* with how it was said. Like the fact that it could be correctly pronounced in the first place interfered with the laws of reality.

“You’ll get used to it,” Tubbo reassured him.

As Ranboo watched an evil glint spark in Tommy’s eye, he found himself harboring doubts.

---

“George.”

“Grg.”

“*George.*”

“Just give it up,” Sapnap muttered. “At least your name sounds better than mine.”

George rounded on him with a scowl. “How is guh-- gr-- *grrg* better than sp-nf?”

“Grg nd Spnp,” Dream corrected with a look of consternation. “Gt t *rght*, Ggy.”

“*That’s even worse!*”

---

“Tommy. For the love of all that is good on this server. I am asking you to. *Fucking. Stop.*”

“N,” Tommy chirped.

Wilbur’s eyebrow twitched as a migraine brewed behind his temples. “*Tommy.*”

“Oh c’mon, Wilbur, let the kid live a little.” Schlatt swung an arm around the other man’s shoulders. He was promptly shoved away. “*Rude.*”

“Fuck off,” Wilbur snapped. “Tommy--”

“Ll sy wht fckng *wnt* t, *Wlbr.*”

“Yeah, *Wibbler.* The kid has free speech. Can’t take away his rights like that.”

Wilbur spluttered. “You-- you were a *dictator!*”

“Hey, I’m reformed! I saw the light of democracy!”

“*You literally tried to rig the last election!*”

“Reformation takes time!”

“Fight fight fight fight fight,” Tommy cheered from the sidelines. Wilbur snarled, threw his hands in the air, and stormed off.

---

“Hey. Hey Dream. Say Bad’s full name.”

Dream raised an eyebrow. “Bdbyhl.”

Skeppy scrunched his nose. “Yeah, that’s fucking *weird*.”

A distant “*Language!*” came floating over to them. Bad’s head popped up over the wall he was building, face creased in a scowl.

Dream and Skeppy exchanged glances. “Hey, Bad,” Skeppy called. “You know, now that Dream talks weird, he technically can’t curse anymore. So it should be fine if he-- you know--”

“Btch.”

“--does that!”

Bad spluttered. “That’s-- that’s not--”

“Technically not cursing.”

“It-- it is! *Language!*”

**197.**

“Listen, I like this server and all, but. . .” Karl trailed off, adjusting his grip on his axe. “Do you. . . ever feel like there’s something. . . *off* about Dream?”

“Oh *thank fuck*.” At the baffled stare he received, Quackity threw his hands up in the air. “Listen, I thought I was losing it but I thought his eyes just *glowed* sometimes--”

“Right!” Karl nodded fervently. “And there’s just the way he *lags*, or when he does that *staring* thing!”

They shuddered in unison, recalling the urge to *run-run-run* that appeared every time Dream *looked* at them for a few moments too long. There wasn’t even anything wrong with Dream’s stare - it just made some long-forgotten instinct shriek with terror.

“Karl! Quackity!”

“Speak of the devil,” Quackity muttered. He pasted on a smile and turned to face the approaching man. “Hey, Dream! What brings you out here?”

Dream blinked at him. “Oh, I was looking for Tommy. I heard voices here, so--” he gestured around them. “Have you seen him?”

Quackity wanted to ask why Dream was looking for Tommy in the middle of a forest, but something told him he didn’t want to know. “No, sorry. We’ve been out here cutting wood for the last half hour, haven’t seen him.”

Behind Dream’s back, Karl gestured frantically at Dream’s leg. Said leg appeared to be partially phasing through a tree trunk. Quackity’s smile became noticeably strained.

A brief flash of disappointment crossed Dream’s face, but he just shrugged and straightened up. “Well, thanks anyway. I’ll leave you to it.” With that, he turned and disappeared into the foliage. The leaves did not rustle as he moved through them.

“What the honk,” Karl whispered. Quackity agreed with the sentiment.

---

“Uh, Ponk, could you help me?”

Ponk squinted suspiciously at Dream. “Depends. What do you need help with?”

“I . . . hurt my arm?”

Ponk stopped rummaging through his chest long enough to turn an incredulous look on him. “Bad enough that you came to me instead of using a potion?”

In answer, Dream pulled his cloak off to reveal that he was missing an arm. Then he pulled said arm from his inventory.

There was a lot of screaming and panicked scrambling. Then more screaming when Dream tried to explain to him that it was okay, he didn’t really need all his limbs anyway.

*“How the fuck did you even lose your arm?!”* Ponk demanded, prodding the not-quite-flesh limb on his table with horrified fascination. *“Why the fuck isn’t it bleeding and what the fuck is this your skin like this why does it feel so weird--”*

“Um, yeah? My skin is just. . . naturally like that, I guess. And, uh, Tommy accidentally pulled my arm off.”

Ponk stopped poking at the arm to stare at him. “. . . Tommy did what.”

“Pulled it off.”

“... Arms don’t just come *off*, Dream.”

“Oh.” Dream looked down at his floppy sleeve, then at his missing limb, then up at Ponk.  
“They-- they don’t?”

“*No!*”

“Not even if you pull really hard?”

“I--” Ponk took a step back, pressed his hands to his face, and took a deep, *deep* breath. “No. Dream. Arms don’t just. Break off. Like that. There’s supposed to be-- *blood*.” Not clean detachment. Shit, did Dream even have blood? Did Dream have *bones*?

Dream’s voice broke him from his spiral down the rabbit hole known as *well-shit-my-friend-might-not-conform-to-baseline-biology*. “Oh. Well. I was hoping you could sew it back on. Or something. Superglue might work too.”

Supergluing arms back on was *definitely* not professional medical practice, but at this point anything to do with. . . whatever-the-fuck-Dream-was would probably go straight past “unprofessional” and into the realm of malpractice. Potions wouldn’t work either - not for an entire *arm*. And given the. . . gelatin-like consistency of Dream’s skin, Ponk wasn’t about to try a needle and thread.

Superglue it was.

And if Ponk had a mental breakdown a few hours after Dream left with a freshly-superglued, fully-functional arm. . . that was his business and nobody else’s.

---

“--so I was thinking this build could be our embassy, you know? Since it’s so close to L’Manberg.” Dream glanced back at his friends. “What do you think?”

Deathly silence greeted him. Nearly every member of the L’Manberg Cabinet was gaping at him in unadulterated horror.

“Uh, Dream, your neck’s looking a little--” Tommy motioned at his own neck. Dream blinked at him, then made a little “oh” of realization. The assembled L’Manbergians watched as he shuffled in place, turning so that his neck realigned itself from its anatomically unfeasible position with a sickening *crunch*.

“Better?”

Tommy sent him a thumbs up. Dream nodded, and proceeded with his monologue.

Nobody dared to question what had just occurred.



---

A shadow passed over his window.

Sam looked up from the redstone mechanism he'd been fiddling with just in time to see Dream. . . *pass by*.

There was no way to explain the movement he made. The only comprehensible aspect of it was that he moved horizontally across the view of Sam's window.

The creeper hybrid calmly set down the gadget, went to the window, and closed the curtains. Then he turned on his heel and headed for his bedroom.

. . . He needed to lie down.

---

--right here, so we reworked the wiring here so we could fit more projectiles in the cannon. As Tommy says, the more glitter, the better, and. . ." Dream trailed off, realizing that Fundy was not paying attention to Dream's explanation concerning the glitter cannon prototype. ". . . sorry, is this boring?"

"Um," Fundy said. He'd been staring at something else for a good minute now - that something being Dream's hand. "No, it's just. Uh. Your hand."

Dream looked down at his hand, watched as a good chunk of his fingers glitched out of existence, then casually tucked the faulty appendage into his hoodie pocket. "Oh, uh, ignore that. As I was saying, the--"

"Your fingers just disappeared," Fundy said flatly.

"They do that sometimes. Nothing to worry about. Anyway, the redstone--"

"Your *fingers just disappeared, Dream.*"

". . . Yeah, and?"

Fundy stared at Dream. Dream stared at Fundy.

"I can't do this today," Fundy decided. "Fuck it. Sure. Your fingers just. Disappear sometimes. Yeah. What were you saying about the wiring?"

---

Philza had seen many, many things in his long life. Good things. Terrible things. Things that would drive a lesser man mad.

His time on the Dream SMP so far had been closer to the third than the former two. Mostly because of Dream.

Now, Philza had nothing against Dream. As a person, he was rather pleasant and polite, if reckless and at times socially inept (but then again, weren't they all?). That being said, there was just something *off* about him. Like, *uncanny valley* type shit, and this was coming from a guy who'd looked into the Void and watched it look back. And to top it all off, Tommy seemed to be perfectly fine with his friend(?)'s *totally-a-squishy-human-nothing-to-see-here* vibes. Seriously, what the fuck were they feeding the kids these days?

Point was, Philza preferred to avoid Dream. And Tommy, whenever he was with Dream. Which meant that when he walked into the Community House and came face to face with Dream speaking in tongues while Tommy nodded along, he stopped short and very nearly walked right back out. Unfortunately, the two noticed him before he could retreat and pinned him with intense stares.

There was something fundamentally *wrong* about the current alignment of Dream's posture, but Philza did not Give Enough of a Fuck to look closer. In fact, it was probably best if he just forgot about this whole encounter altogether. Yeah. That sounded like a plan.

Philza pointed a finger at them. "I didn't see anything. I was never here."

With that, he turned on his heel and exited. He definitely didn't hear Tommy's quiet "so, uh, did you figure out your ribcage?" because he'd never been in there. He'd never heard Dream speaking in the Primordial Tongue or whatever the fuck those ungodly sounds had been. No sirree.

There was a bone-chilling hiss behind him, followed by the sensation of something distinctly *eldritch* slithering down his spine. Philza walked faster.

**198.**

In hindsight, things made a lot more sense now.

Sure, learning that Tommy and Dream were a few centuries old was a shock. But once Tubbo had gotten over it, he'd realized it explained a lot of their odd behaviors. For example, why Tommy always ate his food cold instead of warming it up over the stove. Or why Dream had an odd obsession with indoor plumbing. *Or why neither of them were capable of using a fucking communicator like every other player in existence.*

Thing was, the only reason Dream and Tommy hadn't been able to figure out modern technology earlier was because they were too afraid of being outed as immortal. And now

that they *had* been outed. . . well. It led to a few *interesting* situations.

Exhibit A: Tubbo entered his kitchen and found Tommy attempting to light up the stove. With flint and steel.

“Tommy, what--” he started, then fell silent when the not-teenager hissed angrily at the cooking appliance. Sparks fell from his flint and steel, but failed to catch on the metal stove. Frustrated, Tommy rounded on Tubbo.

“How did you light it?” he demanded. “I saw the flame. You had a fire on here when you were-- when you were making cakes in the pans.”

“Pancakes,” Tubbo corrected automatically. “You-- don’t use a flint and steel for these, Tommy.”

“Then. . . how is the fire produced?”

Tubbo, perfectly deadpan, reached past Tommy and turned the dial. The stove lit up. Tommy threw himself backward like a man possessed, but when the fire did not leap out and eat him alive, he crept closer. Tubbo had to whack one of his hands when he reached out to poke at it.

“Witchcraft,” Tommy whispered, eyes fixed on the flickering flames. Tubbo smiled patiently at him and tried very hard not to bang his head against the kitchen counter.

He succeeded. Mostly. Tommy was too distracted turning the stove on and off to notice.

---

Dream pulled his hand out of the appliance with a look of mystified fascination on his face. “It’s like winter in a box.”

“. . . Yes,” Technoblade said slowly. “That’s what a freezer does. It freezes things.”

It wasn’t a big freezer by any means - about the size of half a chest, and created with enchantments and a few minor redstone mechanisms that depend on the weather outside. Thankfully, because he lives in a cold biome, it functions pretty well. It’s the best he could come up with, and nowhere near a masterful construction - but on non-modernized servers like these, you have to build your own technology. Technoblade doesn’t have enough redstone expertise to build anything fancier than a door, so he stuck with the basics. It turned out pretty well, in his opinion.

Dream’s brows furrowed. “This is so small, though. Why don’t you just pack food in the snow outside? It’ll fit more.”

“Because usin’ outside snow isn’t sanitary, Dream.”

“Sanitary?”

“There are germs everywhere.” When Dream just stared blankly at him, Technoblade pinched the bridge of his nose. “*Please* tell me someone explained bacteria to you?”

“Bac-teria?” Dream echoed.

Dear Prime. Technoblade could already feel a headache coming on, and only half of it was thanks to Chat’s raucous cackling. “. . . Sit down, nerd. There's some stuff you need to know.”

---

"Tommy. Can I *please* have my torch back?"

"Finders keepers," Tommy snapped like the mature quasi-immortal being he apparently was. "I found it. It's mine now."

"You took it off the wall," Sam said, pointing to the aforementioned wall. It just so happened that said wall was in his redstone workshop. Which was supposed to be inaccessible to everyone but Sam. And also happened to be full of very volatile, very steal-able weapons. All things considered, it was a blessing that Tommy had only gotten his hands on a redstone torch before Sam had caught him.

“*Finders. Keepers.*”

“Do you even know how to use it?”

Tommy’s expression grew mulish. “I’ll figure it out.”

Sam reached for the redstone torch. Tommy held it out of his reach. “*Tommy.*”

“*Sam.*”

Sam took a step forward, only for his gaze to be caught by a considerable chunk of empty space that had once contained his latest project. In other words, there was a *very large contraption* missing from his workshop. Unfortunately, Sam knew exactly what it was.

“. . . Tommy, did you steal a torch to distract me from noticing that you stole a *TNT launcher*?”

Tommy went pale. “Wh-what’s TNT? And I don’t steal! I never steal!”

Sam stared at him. “. . . How did you even move a whole *TNT launcher*?”

"Wouldn't you like to know, weather boy."

---

“Dream, what. . . what the fuck are you doing?”

“I was told this was a modern intimidation tactic.”

Wilbur stared down at the shorter man. “. . . Is this your way of asking for a hug?”

“No? Fundy called it. . . ah, ‘tee-pose-ing’.”

Dead silence.

“. . . Am I doing it wrong?” Dream raised his arms higher, then lower, achieving a look rather reminiscent of a neon green Flappy Bird. “Should I adjust the angle of my arms?”

“I-- no. No, Dream. Stop.”

“Why? Do you feel frightened?” Dream stepped closer. Against his better judgment, Wilbur found himself stepping back. “Is this correct?”

“Dream--”

"Am I doing this right? *Are you feeling intimidated?*"

"Dream *please--*"

**199.** *the adventures of dreaxter, pt. 10* ([see previous parts of this loop here](#))

“Fuck fuck fuck fuck fuck,” Quackity chanted. He fumbled with the clasps of his chestplate, trying to ignore the mocking laughter ringing through his head. It sounded an awful lot like Ghlatt’s.

*You’ve really fucked up this time, imaginary-Ghlatt cackled. They’re onto you. Better start running, flatty patty.*

“You’re the one who started this shit,” Quackity hissed under his breath. He shoveled a few healing items into his inventory and slammed the chest shut. “Fuck, now I’m talking to myself.”

He spun on his heel and strode out of his bunker. The lights of Las Nevadas shone in the distance, but Quackity forced himself to turn away. Staying in civilized territory was too dangerous now. If Sapnap and the others hadn’t already found out about what he’d done, they’d know soon.

Quackity held no illusions about what he’d done. Torturing Dream had been a fucked up thing to do. *Killing* Dream, even unintentionally, was a fucked up thing to do. If the others caught up to him, there’d be hell to pay - so Quackity wasn’t sticking around to dish out.

The desert stretched on as far as the eye could see. Any ordinary traveler would have gotten turned around in all the sand and dust and dirt. But Quackity knew this land like the back of his hand - he'd mapped out every corner of it, figuring out the best routes in-- and out. After all, it wouldn't do to build himself into a corner.

Heaving a heavy sigh, he trudged over another sand dune. The moon was shining down on him overhead, bathing the world in monochromatic silvers and blues. It was so easy to forget how beautiful this world could be, when it was untouched by war and greed.

Then *color* flashed in the corner of his eye.

Quackity's head snapped to the right. A glowing figure drifted across the horizon, clad in desaturated green. Quackity could recognize that silhouette anywhere.

A wave of fury roared through him, crashing against the inside of his skull and leaving his ears ringing. Before he even realized what he was doing, he was striding towards the ghost. Sand sprayed beneath his heels as he drew near, alerting the other to his presence. The entity turned-- and went perfectly still.

"*You*," Quackity hissed, distantly aware of the way Dream's eyes went dark. "*You useless, good-for-nothing piece of shit*. None of this would've happened if you'd just *handed over the damn book*."

The ghost just fucking *stared* at him, face frozen in infuriating blankness. Quackity reached out to shove him, but his hand swiped ineffectually through the Dream's incorporeal body. This only made Quackity's frustration burn hotter, and before he knew it, he was *screaming*. He couldn't quite hear his own words over the roaring in his ears, but he knew it was something along the lines of "*this is all your fault*" and "*you should've just given me the fucking book*". Through the red haze clouding his vision, he could see the way Dream folded in on himself like a dead spider. *Good*, the more vicious part of him thought. *Let him hurt. Let him suffer what I did.*

*Stop*, the corner of his mind that remembered crumpled feathers and shattered glass begged. *You've gone too far.*

But Quackity had already gone too far. Had been gone too far for him to ever go back. His life was falling apart for the hundredth time since he'd stepped foot on this accursed server, and he was *fucking sick and tired of it*. Time and again the monsters who'd hurt him got away, fleeing to Death's domain and only returning to haunt him when they'd grown convinced of their own invincibility.

But Quackity wasn't going to take this lying down. He'd spent *months* learning how to take Dream apart with words alone, and he was going to *use it*. So he shouted and shouted until he was hoarse, until his venomous accusations broke apart and he was left panting beneath the weight of his own fury. Through it all, Dream didn't speak. Didn't move. Just *looked* at him like he was looking *through* him. It pissed Quackity off, so he shouted some more. Only when a spell of lightheadedness had him rocking back on his heels and gritting his teeth did the haze clear from his vision. He inhaled sharply, trying to pull himself together.

Silence rang out for a full minute, broken only by Quackity's heavy breathing. Finally, *finally*, the ghost moved to speak. Quackity watched hungrily Dream's lips parted-- but instead of words, viscous *green* poured forth.

Quackity cursed and backpedaled as the tar-like substance spotted the sand. Dream hunched over, eyes wide and bewildered as he clapped a hand over his chin. His form fizzled and stuttered like a bad television signal, snatches of twisted limbs and sickening viridian swirling in and out of existence. Quackity, caught between horror and nauseated fascination, reached out to do. . . *something*, he didn't know what-- and was stopped short by a sword at his throat.

"Hey. Step back."

Slowly, Quackity's eyes trailed from the blade at his neck to the person who held it. Tommy stared back, face perfectly neutral. The set of his jaw and the ice in his gaze, however, told Quackity all he needed to know.

"Wh-- are you *angry*?" An incredulous laugh crackled in Quackity's chest, caught in his ribs, and tripped out as a distorted wheeze of disbelief. "You're angry at *me*?"

"I dunno, watching you scream at a guy until he spit up blood was kinda annoying."

"He killed you!" Quackity thrust a hand in Dream's direction. "He-- he fucking *beat you to death* in prison, *abused* you-- and now you're defending him? All because of some *memory loss*?"

Tommy's glower grew more pronounced. "It's not just because of the memory loss--"

"Oh no, I'm sorry, it's because he's *nice* too. Are you buying this bullshit? He dies and comes back with a bit less of his brain rattling around in his head and suddenly everyone just forgives him for the shit he did?"

Tommy barked out a laugh. Quackity reared back, struck by how utterly *humorless* it was.

"Oh, no, Quackity. I didn't *suddenly* forgive him. The others only tolerate him 'cause Dreaxter *isn't Dream*." Tommy's eyes narrowed. "Still doesn't make what you did to either of them okay."

"Tommy--"

"Back off, Quackity. And don't think about running."

Quackity raised an eyebrow, ignoring the way his heart pounded in his ears. "I'm in full netherite. You have a diamond sword. You think you can stop me?"

Tommy snorted. "I sent my coordinates to the World Chat when I found you, dumbass. You were too busy screaming at Dream to notice."

"*Quackity*," someone snarled behind him.

Quackity's heart sunk into his boots. Slowly, he turned, and met the gaze of one *very pissed off* Sapnap.

The others were here. Quackity was out of time.

**200.** (for previous part of this loop, see **195.** in Chapter 39)

"Dream."

"Sapnap? You look-- you look terrible."

"Thank you," Sapnap snarked. He shook his head when Dream stepped aside, a silent invitation to enter the house. "I'll be quick-- I need your help."

"With what?"

"Karl's missing."

Dream blinked. "*Missing?*"

A frown creased Sapnap's mouth as he twisted his necklace between his fingers. The rings strung on it clinked together. "Yeah. He-- he just left one morning and never came back. He does disappear sometimes, for a week or two, but-- it's been a month."

"You've--"

"Asked around, yeah. Sent a server message too. Nobody's seen him." Sapnap grimaced.

"George, Q and I are gonna split up and look around the server. It would help if there were more people involved, and I trust you, so. . ."

"So you came to ask me for help."

Sapnap nodded. Dream bit the inside of his cheek, rocking back on his heels as he thought.

"I'm bringing Tommy into this," he said. Sapnap blinked, then shrugged.

"I-- yeah, sure. If you think he'll help." Sapnap's smile was sardonic and lacking in any form of humor. "More the merrier."

"Okay. Give me a second to message him?"

"Sure, man. Actually-- can you two take a look around the Arctic? George is looking through Kinoko right now and I'm headed to L'Manberg, but the Arctic's a big place and I don't know if he's out there somewhere but with both you and Tommy you should be able to--"

Dream reached out and caught hold of Sapnap's shoulder. "Pandas. Calm down. It's okay. We'll find him, I promise."



Sapnap sucked in a sharp breath. He ducked his head, stood still for a moment, then exhaled. "Yeah. I. . . yeah. Thanks."

"Anytime."

Sapnap shook himself and looked up at the sky. "We're burning sunlight. You message Tommy. I'm. . . I'm going to head over to L'Manberg." With that, he turned on his heel and marched away. Dream watched him go, then ducked back into his house and pulled out his communicator.

### **Private Messaging: TommyInnit**

*<Dream> where are you?*

*<TommyInnit> stealing tecnos food*

*<TommyInnit> why*

*<Dream> karls missing, sapnap asked me to search the arctic with you*

*<Dream> meet you in the forest?*

*<TommyInnit> be there in five*

---

"But did Karl go missing in loop Zero?"

"I don't *know*, okay," Tommy snapped. He raked a hand through his hair. "I never-- I never got involved in that shit with Las Nevadas and Kinoko Kingdom. Fuck, I didn't even *know* Karl that well."

"Then what *did* you know?" Dream pressed. "If there's anything. . ."

Tommy huffed. "Okay, so Karl, Sapnap and Quackity were engaged in loop zero too-- do you know that already?" Dream shook his head. "Right, they were engaged-- got married about a year and a half after you got tossed in jail. I don't know what the fuck happened between the engagement and the wedding, I was busy with my own stuff-- but I visited Las Nevadas once with Wilbur about half a year before they said their vows, and Q was being cagey as fuck when Wil brought up his fiances, so they probably had a fight before they made up. Or I'm just reading too much into it. Point is, I don't know shit, Dream-- I attended their wedding, ran into them occasionally around the server but--"

Dream blinked at the sudden silence. ". . . Tommy?"

“Just remembered something, uh. . . at the planning meeting, Karl wasn’t there. But a lot of people weren’t there so--”

“Planning meeting?”

Tommy avoided his gaze. “To drag you back to jail.”

“Oh. *Oh.*”

“Yeah.” Tommy cleared his throat. “Like I said, Karl wasn’t there, but a lot of other people weren’t there - Bad, Ant, George. . . you know. And if Karl really went missing, I think-- I think Sapnap or Quackity would have asked me if I’d seen him. So, uh. . . I’d say he didn’t?”

“Which means he disappeared because of something we did,” Dream muttered.

“Yeah. But *what?*”

They lapsed into a contemplative silence, which was shattered by their communicators going off in tandem. Dream pulled his out, flipping it on to see three new messages from George.

<GeorgeNotFound> *karl's library*

<GeorgeNotFound> *now*

<GeorgeNotFound> *I found something*

---

“What the fuck?” Quackity stared at the bookshelf. “Why would Karl have a hidden doorway?”

George shrugged. “I don’t know. I just found it. Didn’t feel safe going in without backup.”

“Which was a good decision,” Dream cut in before Quackity could speak. “It could be a trap, so be careful.”

“Right, but why the fuck would Karl have a trapped room in his *library?*”

“Let’s find out,” Sapnap growled. He plunged into the darkness.

Redstone torches and blocks of glowstone lit up as they entered the room, casting a dim light across the shelves that lined the far wall. The other wall was occupied by a large desk. A corkboard hung over the desk, covered with hundreds of slips of paper. On the opposite wall, a clock ticked beside a calendar.

Sapnap stopped in his tracks, causing Tommy to crash right into him. “Hey!” the teenager complained. “What’s--”

His voice died in his throat as he followed Sapnap's gaze. Beside the door through which they'd just come through, a large patch of rust stained the carpet. It was a color all five people in the room were very familiar with.

"Fuck," Tommy breathed, eyes raking over the bloodstains and landing on the ashy handprints streaked across the wallpaper above them. "*Fuck.*"

Quackity, meanwhile, had crossed the room in four strides and was feeling frantically across the wall. "There's gotta be-- gotta be another secret compartment somewhere," he muttered. "There isn't a . . . a *trail* outside the door."

"Here," George interrupted. He swung his own lantern towards the shadowy back corner of the room, revealing a ladder that rose up to a trapdoor.

Quackity lunged for it without hesitation, Sapnap hot on his heels. "KARL?!" he screamed. "KARL, ARE YOU UP THERE?"

George let out a curse and scrambled after them. Dream glanced at Tommy, who shrugged and followed.

Quackity reached the top of the ladder and pressed at the trapdoor, testing its weight. Sunlight leaked through the edges as it lifted. Quackity heaved it up, grunting, and dragged himself into the open air.

A cursory sweep showed no Karl. They were in a clearing in what appeared to be a forest, though the area was unfamiliar to Dream. Sunlight filtered through the leaves, dappling the ground with drops of gold.

Tommy swore under his breath. Dream followed his gaze, eyes landing on the patch of freshly-disturbed earth on the other side of the clearing. A simple wooden cross, little more than two sticks bound together with twine, had been stabbed into the ground at its head.

A grave.

Sapnap was the first to move. He pushed past Quackity and strode forward, crossing the distance in ten paces. Up close, the cross looked even sadder than before. It had clearly been made in haste, the wooden sticks uncarved and appearing much like they'd simply been snapped off of a tree. It could have been a child's art project, if not for one thing.

A weathered string was looped around the cross. A familiar string. In fact, it was the same kind of string that Quackity and Sapnap wore around their necks. Two russet-stained bands hung from it, one studded with fire opals and the other inlaid with sapphires.

Sapnap's hand went to his own necklace. With fumbling hands, he pulled it out, staring at the rings. He looked at the ones on the grave, then at his own rings. Grave. Rings. Grave. Rings.

Dream reached out and pulled his hands down, forcing him to let go of the rings. "Calm down," he snapped. "It might not--"

"It's not him."

Dream, George and Tommy turned to Quackity, who was gripping his own wedding rings in a whitened fist. "It's not him," the duck hybrid repeated. "He's not dead."

"That's *my ring*," Sapnap whispered. "That's *your* ring, Quackity, that's his necklace--"

"He's *not dead*," Quackity snapped. "He still has two lives, he wouldn't just die so easily--"

--and the bloodstains," Sapnap continued, like he hadn't even heard him. "That's too much blood for one person to lose--"

"Shut up!"

Sapnap's jaw clicked shut. Quackity pressed his hands over his ears as his knees hit the ground. He hunched forward, pressing his forehead into the dirt. "Shut up, shut up, shut up," he chanted. "He's not dead, *he's*--"

Without warning, he lunged forward, clawing at the grave with his bare hands. Sapnap tried to pull him back, but Quackity shook him off. "It's someone else," he insisted. "It's not him, it *can't be*--"

George, meanwhile, had gone very, very still. Dream wavered, torn between helping Sapnap with Quackity or comforting George. "George. . .?" he asked.

"Dream." George's voice was flat. He curled his hands in the hem of his shirt, gaze fixed on the grave as Sapnap wrestled Quackity back. "Could we. . . could we just have some time alone?"

Quackity was outright sobbing now, hands scratching at air as Sapnap dragged him away from the tomb. Part of the shallow grave had been dug away, revealing a patch of colorful cloth. "Not him," the duck hybrid choked out. "It *can't* be him--"

Dream and Tommy exchanged glances. Without a word, they headed back towards the trapdoor.

---

"You know," Tommy said into the silence. "You could just revive him and ask."

Dream swallowed, hands curling into fists. ". . . Theoretically, yes."

"But?"

"It might be better to just look at his notes." Dream swept an arm around the room, indicating the virtual treasure trove of information now available to them. Whatever morality he had left protested at the thought of snooping, but he *needed* to figure out what had happened this loop so it wouldn't happen again. "Karl obviously didn't want people to find this, and if he's alive again--"

--he'll try to stop us. Right." Tommy grimaced, eyeing the cluttered bookshelves. "I call the desk."

"I'll start with the chests, then." Dream cracked his knuckles and headed for a chest tucked beside a bookshelf. He skimmed a finger across the top, grimacing when it came away covered in dust. Not a great sign.

Opening the chest confirmed his suspicions. It was empty.

Dream poked around a bit just to check. No false bottoms, no hidden engravings - it was an empty chest, through and through. He shut it, waved away the cloud of dust that rose up, then surveyed the room for the next. His gaze caught on a chest that sat half-hidden behind the desk. Circling around Tommy, who was still glaring furiously at the runes scribbled across several sheets of parchment, he knelt down beside it.

The dust layer on this one was just as thick. Probably empty, too. Dream pried it open.

To his surprise, the chest contained a rectangular piece of wood (*a button*, his mind supplied) and a journal. Dream gingerly extricated the latter, flipping it open to find more runes. Thank Prime that they'd scoured so many strongholds, or else Dream might have been forced to spend hours poring over a translation book to decipher a library's worth of texts.

He squinted at the pages, recalling the runes, then set to deciphering Karl's secrets.

Karl's handwriting was only slightly better than Ponk's so-called "doctor's handwriting", so Dream was forced to guess on several runes. He soon fell into the routine of mindless translating, reading the words but failing to comprehend them. As such, he was halfway through the second paragraph before his mind caught up to what he'd been reading and he just. . . stopped.

He reread the paragraph. Then read it again. "Oh shit," he muttered. "Tommy. Tommy, get over here."

Tommy turned away from the corkboard. Dream shoved the journal at him, hands shaking as Tommy took it. The other looper's eyes traced the words scattered across the pages, growing wider and wider with each line. At last, he looked up at Dream.

"What the fuck," he breathed.

Dream smiled. There was no humor in it. "Yup. Looks like we found Connor's time traveler."

## Chapter End Notes

You get feral boys content but at what cost  
anyway. FANART!

This hilarious drawing of the [conspiracy about Tommy's age](#), drawn by Lu!!

[The 3rd traveler](#) and [some beautiful sketches](#) by Astral! Also [adorable tempus!karl art](#) and [the personification of the inbetween](#) (astral you're spoiling me hsljdjflksdjfkdlf) [This hilarious drawing of \(failed\) cottagecore!dream](#) by thighs! And shadow has blessed us with drawings of [our beloved clementine](#) <3 [Small scenes from a LOT of loops](#), all drawn by bdouble0w0!!

### **Loop Notes**

**197.** Dream was testing out all the different funky things ghosts can do. He. . . got a little carried away.

**198.** Whoever got called out first for understanding how to properly use modern technology would lose the game. Tommy won after Dream broke down laughing at George's expression when he found him shouting nonsense at his communicator.

**200.** And so begins the end. (Not that they know it yet.)

# Chapter 41

## Chapter Notes

Hi it's been a minute sorry D: Muse was getting sick of crack so she took me on a whole angst arc. I did get most of it out by spamming a double update for Four's a Crowd tho (psst go read that if you like my writing)

A couple of you have been asking about the ending of this fic! It's going to be bittersweet, leaning towards the sweet. Don't worry, it's not sad/tragic, and it's still a while away! :D

### Spotlighted Comments

**RedLeaf712:** Oh dear god, the vowels. They've been stolen. The cults have stolen them. **shewhomustnotbenamed:**

tubbo: what are u doing?

Tommy, about to light tubbo's house on fire while on his boomer arc: Lighting the stove :)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

### **201.** *(credit to para)*

*“And here we see a wild Drem Damascus fulfilling its instinctive drive to manipulate minors.”*

“I’m going to push you off a cliff.”

*“When the Drem Damascus is aggravated, it will make threats. However, it is unable to do so due to its pathetic nature.”*

“Oh, I’ll show you ‘pathetic’ --”

*“The Drem Damascus also wears a mask, as to hide his face. We all know, however, that it is an ugly bitch.”*

Dream took a deep, calming breath. “Tommy. Shut up.”

*“The Drem Damascus now attempts a calming behavior by respirating slowly. It then insults the air. One must question the sanity of the Drem Damascus, if it had any to begin with.”*

“One must question the intelligence of the narrator, and whether he had any to begin with--”

“Um,” said a small voice. Dream turned to see Tubbo staring at him with wide eyes. Right. He’d been in the middle of a negotiation when Toast, in all his ghostly glory, had shown up to narrate like this was some kind of nature documentary. “W-was that. . . was that Tommy?”

“Tommy,” Dream ground out, “is in exile, like he’s *supposed to be*. He’s *not* supposed to be here.”

*“The Drem Damascus now attempts to avoid questioning by gaslighting its prey with suppositions. Will he be successful?”*

Tubbo turned to inspect the space the ghost was occupying. Since Tommy was currently invisible, it was a futile effort. “. . . Tommy? Is that you?”

*“The prey is not fooled! It attempts to question the subject directly. How will the Drem Damascus respond?”*

Dream pulled a bucket of water out of his inventory and hurled it in Tommy’s general direction. The water splashed to the ground, having met no resistance.

*“With violence!”* Tommy’s voice now came from directly above them, which elicited a shriek of surprise from Tubbo. *“Unfortunately for the Drem Damascus, it is too stupid to aim properly. Its attack has no effect.”*

Dream took a moment to consider the current situation, then turned to Tubbo and said, “We’ll finish this later.” Without waiting for a reply, he turned and stalked off.

*“The Drem Damascus has chosen to retreat!”*

Without breaking his stride, Dream turned his head to the right and slowly, *deliberately*, raised a middle finger. Tommy’s raucous cackling followed him all the way out of L’Manberg.

---

*“Does the Drem Damascus have other behaviors besides manipulating minors, you ask? Indeed, it does. And we shall soon see the Drem Damascus engaging in another normal Drem behavior: trampling other sentients with its horse.”*

Dream glowered at the reins in his hands. “That was *one time*.”

*“You broke my spine!”* Tommy shrieked indignantly, then remembered that he was busy being the world’s biggest pain in the neck. *“Ahem. I mean. The Drem enjoys directing its steed to run other sentient beings over.”*

Dream ground his teeth and consciously focused on not plotting murder.

*“This enjoyment comes from the internal reward system unique to the Drem Damascus: for each being it tramples while it rides about on horseback, it gains a point. Of course, the points are useless, but the Drem Damascus places value in useless things because it is an idiot.”*



*I will not exorcize my fellow looper,* Dream chanted in his head. *I will not exorcize my fellow looper. That would be incredibly rude.*

*It would be great for your mental health,* some fucked-up part of his brain pointed out.

*What mental health?* Dream asked his brain. His brain had no answer. Which was about as much Dream was expecting, really.

Meanwhile, Tommy began making excited noises. Dream snapped out of his internal dialogue to see that they were approaching a village. Tommy had returned to the visible spectrum and was now gesturing enthusiastically towards a tiny villager who was playing some sort of game with a ball. It looked up as they approached.

*“A child! Two points!”*

“Absolutely the fuck *not*,” Dream snarled, jerking the reins. Spirit snorted but changed direction, circling the village in lieu of going through it.

*“You’re fuckin’ boring.”*

“Excuse me for not wanting to risk you goading me into committing *murder!*”

*“The Drem Damascus is a boring little bitch with no sense of humor.”*

Dream hunched lower in his saddle and silently prayed for patience.

## **202.** *(credit to Chara)*

“So what have we learned from this?”

“Not to make Wilbur and Schlatt befriend each other,” Tommy grumbled. He sank lower in his chair. “Look, at least this time wasn’t as bad as that loop with Niki, Tubbo and Ranboo!”

Dream, with his face set in perfect deadpan, stood and pulled back the window curtain to reveal the city outside. The walls of every building in L’Manberg were plastered with spray paint and crude posters. “Ah, yes, ‘not as bad’.”

“They’re not breaking *reality*, I don’t think--”

The door slammed open, interrupting Tommy’s protests. “Dream!” Wilbur sang, practically *prancing* into the room. He stopped dead in his tracks when he saw the two of them sitting at the table. “. . . Tommy? What are you doing here?”

“Listening to Dream bitch about life.”

Wilbur nodded as though this was a perfectly acceptable answer, then glanced behind him and did a double take. “Oh, I lost Schlatt. Give me a moment.”

With that, he skipped back to the door and yanked it open, then reached down and began the arduous process of dragging an unresponsive Schlatt into the house by his ankle. The man didn't so much as twitch as he was yanked across the threshold, knocking his head against the doorframe as he went. Wilbur unceremoniously deposited him facedown on Dream's fluffy rugs.

Tommy squinted at the ram hybrid. "Is he. . . dead?"

"No," Schlatt said into the carpet. "Wishing I was, though."

"And some caffeine will fix that!" Wilbur had abandoned his friend to rummage through Dream's cabinets. "Hey, Dream, where do you keep your coffee?"

". . . I'm not sure giving you coffee is a good--"

"Aha!" Wilbur popped to his feet, a handful of dusty coffee beans and a coffee pot in his hands. "Aaaand here's your coffee pot. Perfect."

"I don't think--"

Wilbur ignored Dream's weak protests as he set about preparing the coffee with manic energy. Schlatt, meanwhile, had rolled over and was glaring at the ceiling as though it had personally offended him. "I don't fucking *want* caffeine, Wilbur. I want *whiskey*."

"Whiskey schmiskey," Wilbur dismissed. "It's all about alcohol for you. You're so *blind* to the wonders of caffeine--"

"And you're blind to the wonders of being drunk--"

--"Oh, I've been drunk before. Not in the mood for it now." Wilbur wrinkled his nose and yanked the coffee pot out of the machine. Dream made a noise like a dying cat as his beloved coffeemaker suffered abuse. "I'll add some vodka if you'll drink it."

Schlatt peeled open one tired eye to squint judgmentally at him. "You're going to combine caffeine and alcohol?"

Wilbur shrugged. "It won't kill you. Probably."

". . . Fuck it. Why not."

Wilbur pulled a bottle from his inventory. "The Schlatt special, coming right up! A splash of vodka-- and to top it all off, drugs!"

Dream and Tommy watched in silent horror as he poured two shots of vodka into the pot, then followed it up with an entire potion of speed. He handed the entire receptacle to Schlatt, who promptly proceeded to chug it.

"You're going to die of organ failure," Tommy informed him. Schlatt cracked one eye open to glower at him.

“Kinda the point, kid.”

“None of that,” Wilbur chirped. “You can’t die before we’ve completed our grand plans for world domination.”

“Excuse me,” said Dream, “your grand plans for *what?*”

“Nothing you need to worry about,” Wilbur assured him. “Schlatt, are you done recharging?”

Schlatt emptied the last dregs of Pure Witchcraft from the coffeepot and slammed it down on the ground. “Fuck yeah, I’m done. Let’s go.”

“Excellent!” Wilbur yanked him to his feet and dragged him towards the door. “Bye Tommy, bye Dream! If you hear any screaming or see any crime being committed for the next 48 hours, it definitely wasn’t us, okay? Okay. See you later!”

“*Wait--*” Dream protested, but the two menaces were already gone. The door was left hanging ajar in their wake, now sporting several dents.

Slowly, Dream turned and stared flatly at Tommy. “Do you understand now?”

“... Yeah. Yeah, I do.”

## 203.

It wasn’t a big difference, really. Tommy had gotten to Wilbur before Philza did, and confronted him about his plans to blow up L’Manberg. Wilbur had still pushed the button, of course. And just like every other time he’d done this, Tommy had leapt forward to pull Wilbur away from the explosion.

But he’d miscalculated. He’d grown complacent, *arrogant*, and that meant he was just a few seconds too slow. Wilbur had seen him coming, had shoved him back, and stumbled right into the fiery inferno.

This time, Wilbur didn’t die with a sword through the heart and tears of regret on his tongue. He died with gunpowder in his blood and a half-crazed smile on his lips.

That. . . had unforeseen consequences.

---

*“YOU THOUGHT THE BUR WAS GONE, HUH? NEWSFLASH MOTHERFUCKERS, I’M BACK AND BETTER THAN EVER!”*

“Is that. . .” Dream blinked furiously, as though it would somehow make the strange sight before him disappear. “Is that *Ghostbur*?”

Tommy shrugged. “Looks like it.”

“Why’s he so. . . uh.” Dream gestured vaguely, unable to put the difference into quantifiable terms. “Like *that*?”

“*Are you talking about me?*” Both loopers jumped and whipped around to find Ghostbur suddenly floating behind them, glowering disapprovingly. “*You shouldn’t talk about people behind their backs, you know! It’s very impolite!*”

“Uh,” Tommy squeaked. “Sorry?”

Ghostbur giggled. There was a wild note to it that had both loopers stepping back. “*I forgive you! I’ll always forgive you, Tommy. But--*” Ghostbur spun to face Dream and jabbed a finger in his face. “*--not you. Bitch. I’m aaaall out of forgiveness for you.*”

Dream just blinked, too dumbfounded to react to the insult. Ghostbur giggled again, tapped Dream’s mask with a little “boop!” and soared away in the direction of L’Manberg.

“All this,” Dream said, “because he exploded instead of getting *stabbed*?”

“I mean, you could say he has an. . . explosive personality now.”

Dream turned and *stared* at Tommy. Tommy wagged his eyebrows. “Eh? Eh? You know? ‘Cause he--”

“You’re dead to me.”

“Tragic. For you.”

The ground rumbled. In the distance, a blue-tinged plume of smoke bloomed over the horizon. Dream took one look at it, turned on his heel, and made the executive decision to disappear for the rest of the loop.

He was *not* dealing with this shit.

**204.** (*credit to the many people who asked for a fusion loop. credit to astral, lee, & shadow for the names!*)

***TW: Minor Body Horror, Vomiting***

“Well, shit,” said Tommy.

“Shit,” Dream agreed. “**You have to stop throwing random things into potions.**”

**“Hey, it has results!”** Tommy experimentally tried to raise their arms and found that the higher set responded to him. **“Ha, you’re still short--”**

**“We’re the same person now, idiot.”**

**“But I get the higher arms!”**

Dream slapped a hand over their mouth, then jerked away. **“Did-- did you just lick me?!”**

**“So what if I did?”**

**“You have the maturity of a five-year-old.”**

**“And you have the intelligence of a depressed coconut. Your point?”**

Their eye twitched. **“I am going to murder you.”**

**“Can’t do it without murdering yourself.”**

**“Oh, I’ll find a way.”** Dream pushed themselves to their knees, and when they didn’t immediately fall over, began the precarious process of standing up. As they straightened to their full height, they swept their gaze over their surroundings.

They were in Tommy’s underground hideout, a dingy dirt room he had dug out for the sole purpose of messing with potions. The floor around them was littered with shattered glass. They raised their hands - all four of them - and turned them over, examining them. The top ones looked like Tommy’s, with chipped fingernails and grimy palms. The bottom ones looked like Dream’s, with scars across the knuckles from one-too-many instances of punching things that had not been made to be punched.

Next, they poked at their clothes. Shreds of Dream’s hoodie hung off of them - part of a sleeve here, a scrap of green there - but more of Tommy’s clothes had survived the fusion. Unfortunately, their lower arms had torn through the cloth, and both their shirt and their jeans seemed a couple inches shorter than usual. They were taller than Tommy, then.

**“Ta-ller than you,”** Tommy sang. Dream moved to whack themselves in the face, then reconsidered and settled for growling angrily instead.

**“This sucks,”** he ground out. **“Where’s the milk?”**

Tommy snorted and made to step right - only to stumble when their shoe did not hit the ground when it was supposed to. **“Woah-- what the fuck? Why are your legs proportioned so weirdly?”**

**“They’re not weird,”** Dream deadpanned. **“I think you’re just used to your unnaturally long legs.”**

For lack of a physical target to direct his ire upon, Tommy ended up glowering at the wall.

**“Ey, my legs are great!”**

**“Suuuuuure.”** Dream took a turn at controlling the legs, and found that only the left responded to him. **“Oh. Oh no. We’re going have to walk together.”**

**“Whaddya me--”** Tommy stepped forward, then flung his set of arms out when their weight distribution teetered dangerously. **“--woah where the fuck is our other leg?!”**

Dream hastily moved their left leg under them so they were no longer at risk of falling over. **“I got it.”**

**“Oh,”** said Tommy. **“Shit.”**

**“It’s okay. Just take a step forward - shift your foot up a couple inches, yep, and now I’m going to go. Don’t move.”** With Dream’s guidance, they managed to shuffle across the room to the chest that contained milk. **“Why don’t you just keep the milk next to the brewing stand?”**

**“Because I test them over there. They don’t *usually* explode--”**

**“‘Usually’.”**

**“Shut up.”** Tommy grumbled, hefting the chest open and retrieving a bottle of milk. Their eyes caught on the smooth glass. **“Oh, that’s fuckin’ *weird*.”**

Their reflection blinked back at them from the curved surface of the bottle. Even with the less-than-perfect reflection, it was easy to see that their eyes were different colors. Their face looked completely foreign, but upon closer inspection, really appeared to be an odd mix of their features.

**“I don’t like this,”** Dream said, and shuddered when the mouth of their reflection moved in tandem with their voice. He quickly uncapped the bottle and moved to down it.

**“Wait--”** One of Tommy’s hands clamped down on Dream’s, preventing him from raising the bottle to their lips. **“Milk might be a bad idea.”**

Their brows furrowed. **“Why? Don’t you want to unfuse?”**

**“Well, uh, milk usually doesn’t work great for physical potions.”**

**“But the de-aging and the animal transformation--”**

**“The de-aging didn’t add any new material and the animal transformations are more. . . *magic* than physical aspects, yeah? This is two separate people fused together - even if the process that got us here *is* the work of a potion, I don’t think the result is something milk can fix. It’d have to-- well, tear us apart. Which would probably kill us. And. I dunno how the respawn system would affect us.”**

Dream considered the milk with a new dose of caution. **“. . . I hate it when you say things that make sense.”**

**“I say things that make sense all the time. I speak so much sense, Dream, I’m so sensible--”**

Dream clamped their jaw shut, earning an indignant (but strangled) squawk from Tommy. He capped the bottle and replaced it in the chest. The enchantments carved along the sides glowed as they worked to lower the temperatures in the box. **“Well, now what?”**

**“We could disappear for this loop,” Tommy said. “Or. You know. Go ghost. Might fix this.”**

**“. . . Let’s save that as a last resort.”**

Tommy shrugged their shoulders. **“So we run away and try starting another disaster cottagecore arc? Hide out in a village?”** Their eyes widened. **“Wait. But what if we fuck with people?”**

Dream stared at the wall. **“What if we *don’t*?”**

**“But Dreeeeeam, it’d be funny! Cottagecore arcs are *boring* now--”**

**“ *Tommy.*”**

**“And it’s not hurting anyone! We might as well use this as an excuse to get me un-exiled.”**

**“. . . I’m not going to talk you out of this, am I?”**

Tommy’s grin was answer enough.

Dream sighed. **“For the record, I think this is a terrible idea.”**

**“Noted and ignored. What’re we naming ourselves?”**

**“I . . . don’t think we can pass ourselves off as one person. We’re too different.”**

**“Yeah, but if we’re *physically* one person we might as well.”** When Dream still hesitated, Tommy sighed. **“C’mooooon, Dream.”**

Dream sighed. **“Fine. What about. . . Drommy?”**

**“Eeeeegh. . . Dreammy?”**

**“I am *not* getting called anything that sounds remotely close to ‘Dreamie’.”**

**“Fair enough.”** Tommy cast their gaze around the laboratory, landing on the jars of glitter stacked neatly on top of the shelves. **“What about ‘glitter’? Nah, that’s not cursed enough.”**

**“Do we *need* to have a cursed name--”**

**“Yes. ‘Shine’? ‘Sparkle’?”**

““ ✨’?”

Their face screwed up. “**How in the *fuck* did you make that sound?**”

Dream repeated the sound. Tommy replicated it, with some difficulty.

““ ✨- ✨... ?”

“Yup. ✨.”

Tommy nodded. “**✨ it is. Now come on, let’s go mess with people!**”

They marched towards the stairs-- and promptly fell over when their left leg failed to catch their weight.

---

“**Now step left-- *other* left, you idiot!**”

“**I’m trying, for fuck’s sake!**” Tommy snarled, right before they walked into a tree. “**Fuck!**”

“**Try harder!**”

“***You* try walking with stubby legs - oh right, you do that every day--**”

“**My legs are not *stubby*!**”

“**They are!**”

“**Oh yeah?! Then how come I run faster than you?**”

“**Because you’re a speedy little bitch!**”

“**Wow, I’ve never heard that insult before--**”

“What the fuck,” said Quackity.

“**Oh hi, Quackity,**” they said, turning around to face him. “**Nothing to see here. Everything is normal and *totally fine*.**”

“What the fuck,” Quackity repeated. His gaze darted from their arms to their legs and up to their face. “You-- who are you? *What* are you?”

Tommy shrugged. “**M ✨. Nice to meet you.**”

Quackity *stared*. “You’re-- was that your name?”



**“Yep. ✨.”** When Quackity kept staring, they sighed. **“Or you can call us Spark if you’re boring. Or Dream and Tommy if you’re even *more* boring, ‘cause we *are* Dream and Tommy. We had a bit of an accident with drugs, so we’re stuck together. Get it? Stuck together--”**

**“No,”** Dream said.

Tommy crossed his arms. **“You’re no fun.”**

The blood drained from Quackity’s face. “You-- Tommy? *Dream?*”

**“That’s us,”** Dream said. **“Don’t wear the names out.”**

“H-how. . .?”

Tommy snorted. **“For fuck’s sake, weren’t you listening? We had a potion accident.”**

“Oh. I. . . I. . . is there anything I could. . . help with? Can you. . . separate?”

**“Dunno how to. We thought about milk, but that might kill us since.”** They gestured at themselves. **“You know.”**

Quackity nodded. His face was still a couple shades paler than usual. “. . . What the *fuck*, man.”

**“You’re telling me.”**

“What the *fuck*, ” Quackity said again. His voice edged on hysterical, but he closed his eyes and breathed it down. “Fuck. Okay. Mental breakdowns later. We need to get you-- *out* of this mess. Shit. Just. Come with me, okay? I’m sure-- Fundy or Tubbo or *someone* can fix this.”

Tommy narrowed their eyes at him. **“Come with you to. . . L’Manberg?”**

“Yeah.”

**“In case you forgot, big Q, we’re half-exiled.”**

Quackity looked sickened. “I, I think we can, uh, make an exception for this.”

**“Glass half full situation,”** Dream joked. **“We’re half- *not* -exiled. That counts for something.”**

Tommy snorted. **“You sure Tubbo an’ the others won’t mind?”**

“Don’t think they will. Uh.” Quackity pulled out his communicator. “I’ll. . . send them a message, to, uh, let them know about this-- this whole-- *fuck--*”

**“It’s fine, big Q. You don’t have to explain.”**

Quackity nodded jerkily and started typing on his communicator with laser intensity. Probably because it was a better alternative than looking at them. Dream politely turned to scan their surroundings so they wouldn't spook him by staring at him for too long.

"Okay," said Quackity. They turned back around to see him putting his communicator on silent and stashing it away. "I, uh, gave them a heads up. They'll be expecting us, so we should-- get going. Follow me."

He began speedwalking away. They stepped forward to follow-- both of them at the same time. Which of course meant that they performed a sort of odd hopping motion that wound up with them flat on their face.

**"This was a mistake,"** Dream said around a mouthful of grass.

Tommy cheerily ignored him, pushed themselves to their feet, and once again began marching after Quackity.

---

Tubbo stared at the. . . *abomination* in front of him.

It stared back, one eye acidic green and the other familiar blue. **"Hi?"** it said at last, and its voice sounded like Dream's - but the cadence and accent was all Tommy's. Tubbo flinched back, cold horror gripping his bones.

"You. . ." he managed to choke out. "Are you. . . Tommy or Dream?"

**"Tommy. Dream."** It glanced down at itself. **"We're still here. Both of us, I mean."**

That was somehow *worse*. If their consciousnesses had merged into one, then this state of existence might've been bearable. But if they were still separate-- if Tommy was still *aware*-- then he was fused into some horrid amalgamation of himself and the man who had killed him twice.

It was a fate worse than death.

"I'm going to throw up," Tubbo declared faintly.

**"Don't,"** the creature advised, which was such a *Tommy* thing to do that Tubbo nearly burst into tears right then and there. **"For fuck's sake, Tubbo, it's not bad. We're not in pain or anything."**

"You're-- you're physically--" Tubbo gestured at 'Spark', unable to finish the sentence.

It shrugged. **"Honestly it's not too bad. It's not like we'll be living the rest of our lives like this."** It paused. **"Well, probably not."**

Tubbo nodded jerkily, pulled out a bucket, and turned aside just in time to begin retching.

**“Oh. Uh. Shit,”** said the creature. **“I didn’t think you’d react this badly. Sorry, big T.”**

Tubbo choked out the worst of it and wiped his mouth with his sleeve. “Tommy,” he croaked out. “You’re a fucking *idiot*.”

**“Yup. Uh. It’s *really* not that bad, I promise? It doesn’t hurt or anything--”**

“Tommy, you’re fused to-- to the guy who killed you *twice*. ”

**“Oh. Shit. Yeah, uh, that seems pretty fucked up, but, uh, it’s been a . . uh. A nice learning experience. Yeah, that. We’ve been bonding and shit. Y’know. Might become friends or something. Kinda like a get-along shirt? The fuck is a get-along shirt? You know, the ones you stick two kids into so they get along. That’s a terrible comparison.”**

Tubbo returned to retching into the bucket. His eyes were tearing up with the force of his nausea.

**“Look what you did! You made Tubbo cry! I’m trying my fucking best, okay?! This is a *very stressful* situation-- be better! *You* be better!”**

It went on bickering with itself for another five minutes. Tubbo just hung onto his bucket for dear life and tried not to spiral into a complete mental breakdown.

---

“What’re you up to, mate?”

**“Building a house,”** Spark said. Philza eyed the build they were creating.

“That’s an . . . interesting house,” he offered politely.

Spark threw their arms - all four of them - into the air. **“I’m *trying* to work around Tommy’s lack of taste - but *Dream*’s the one with no taste - *shut up*, we’re not making it out of dirt *or* cobblestone! Fine, then make it out of amethyst! What the *fuck* is wrong with you?! It’s sparkly, right? We like glitter! That’s not--”**

Philza cleared his throat. “If I may offer a suggestion--”

**“You may not,”** said Spark, then amended, **“*please do*.”**

Having had the last week to acclimate to the strange way Spark spoke, Philza was unbothered. “You could make the house out of wood? Like the other houses here?”

**“But that’s boring,”** Spark grumbled, followed by, **“and wood is too flammable.”**

Philza's eyebrows climbed up his forehead. Spark grimaced.

**"Pretend you didn't hear that. But it's a *totally valid* concern, it's not like we're going to be setting *anything* on fire--"**

"Not saying you will," Philza agreed. "Just keep my house out of it, yeah?"

**"Will do, old man!"**

---

"Hey."

**"Ranboob!"** Spark looked up from where they were sitting cross-legged on their porch, poring over a bundle of cloth. **"What're you doing here?"**

"Just, uh, checking up on you." Ranboo sat down beside them. "How are you doing?"

**"Doing good, big man."** Spark turned their gaze down to the material in their hands. Ranboo tried not to stare too much, but it was *really* weird to see Spark doing stuff with all four of their hands. The lower set was busy measuring out thread, while the upper left held Spark's latest project - a shirt of some kind - and the upper right gesticulated as Spark spoke. **"People are getting used to us, I think. Tubbo and Fundy even visited for lunch today."**

"That's good," Ranboo hummed, watching as the lower two hands pulled the string taut. Spark's upper right hand produced a pair of scissors and cut it with a clean *snip*. "What're you making?"

**"A hoodie! T-shirts are cool, but it's kinda chilly right now."** Spark made a face.

**"Course, I'm gonna dye it red. Green is a terrible color-- no it *isn't*-- you looked like a fuckin' iguana! I don't!"**

Ranboo carefully broke into the argument before it could escalate. "What's. . . an iguana?"

All four of Spark's arms ceased movement. They turned to stare at him. **"You. . . don't know what an iguana is?"**

". . . No?"

**"Huh. Guess it makes sense, they're pretty rare around here. Don't think I've ever seen one in real life, actually. Maybe just in pictures. They're funky little creatures! Never say those words again. I'll say what I-- ANYWAY. Yeah. They're lizards, y'know? Kinda cool-looking. I can try to find a picture for you sometime."**

"That would be nice."

They settled into comfortable silence. Ran watched as Spark threaded a needle, spread the hoodie out on their lap, and started hemming the sleeves. The light of the setting sun painted the white fabric in shades of gold.

**“You know,”** they said a few minutes later, **“I think we’ll be okay. All of us.”**

“Oh?”

**“Yeah. We’ve reached a sort of understanding, I think, both between ourselves and. . . everyone else. Less horrified screaming and whatnot.”** Spark peered up at him through a curtain of dirty-blond hair. Their hands continued their work. **“You were less freaked out about all this than the others.”**

“Ah, well, you said you were. . . okay? And you didn’t seem really upset by it all.” Ranboo shrugged, curling his claws in the fabric of his pants. “I’m not too bothered by, uh, inhuman anatomy either. Because. Yeah.”

Spark snorted. **“Yeah. Well. If this is how things are going to be now, I think we’ll be okay.”**

Ranboo hummed. “That’s good, that’s good.”

**“Yup.”**

Together, they watched the sun set on L’Manberg.

## 205.

Karl climbed through the trapdoor and hit the ground knees-first. He had enough presence of mind to toss the carpet over it before a phantom blade sank into his chest, sending sparks of agony tingling down his nervous system. He doubled over and pressed his hands over his ribs in a futile attempt to ease the pain. The end of the travels always hurt the worst - the numbing effect of the Inbetween would wear off, and he’d suddenly find every injury he’d gathered over the course of the trip returning as phantom impressions on his skin.

Karl hissed through his teeth and pressed his forehead into the ground, squeezing his eyes shut as he waited for the worst of the pain to pass. As such, he failed to notice the *other* people in the room.

“Woah!”

Karl jerked upright, only to collapse when his entire nervous system *shrieked* at the action. He managed a strangled noise of protest, eyes darting upwards. Who--?

*Tommy* knelt in front of him, hands hovering like he wanted to help Karl but had no idea how to do it. Karl gaped at him, horror cooling the burning in his blood to ice. Another movement caught his eye, and he found his gaze sliding past Tommy to a figure looming over

both of them. They were standing, so he had to tilt his head up up up to get a glimpse of their face--

--*Dream*.

Karl let out a panicked wheeze and scrambled away, flinching when his back hit the wall. He knew Dream was bad. He didn't remember why, but he *knew* he was the reason Sapnap went all quiet sometimes, or why Quackity would spend nights pacing through the halls with an axe in his hands and rage in his bones. Dream couldn't be trusted. Dream was *evil*. And yet here he was, standing in the middle of Karl's sanctuary.

Hands fell upon Karl's shoulders. Karl *screamed* and lashed out, shoving them away and curling into himself. The phantom wounds along his torso flared before returning to their dull throbbing. Static roared in his ears. He didn't know why they were here but they needed to *get out*. This place was supposed to be safe. It was *supposed to be safe*.

His hearing filtered back in. "--not going to hurt you," Tommy said. "You need to breathe, man. Come on. In for four, hold for seven--"

Karl sucked in air through his teeth. He was breathing too fast, but frantic gasping was better than not breathing at all. Tommy repeated his mantra, counting out the seconds until Karl's breathing grew even.

When he no longer felt like he was about to keel over, Karl uncurled from his fetal position just enough to look at the two intruders. "What--" he croaked, his eyes darting between them. "What the *honk* are you doing here?"

Dream and Tommy glanced at each other. "Uh," said Tommy. "Long story. Are you. . . okay?"

"What are you doing here," Karl repeated, because he wasn't physically injured and the two people in his *secret* room were a far more pressing matter.

"Long story," Tommy said again, but when it became clear that Karl wasn't satisfied with that answer, he sighed. "Okay. So. This is going to sound crazy, but we're in a time loop. Me and Dream, I mean. We only found out last loop that you're a time traveler, so. . . we're kinda hoping you can help us?"

Karl stared at him. "What."

"We're stuck in a time loop. You're a time traveler. Is there any way you can get us out of the loop?"

"I. . ." Karl shook himself. "A *time loop*?"

"Yep. They start at random points in the timeline and end randomly too."

"But that doesn't-- that shouldn't be *possible*. The timeline can't loop in on itself - it's a single unified path, not. . ." Karl trailed off and looked up at them. "Do you have any proof?"

“I mean, we. . . found your secret room?”

“You don’t need time loops to do that.”

“I’m friends with Dream now? And we used to hate each other’s guts?”

Karl narrowed his eyes. He didn’t ~~remember~~ know enough to verify his words, but he didn’t want to reveal that. Tommy must have mistaken his hesitation for doubt, though, because he sighed harshly.

“C’mon, Dream, back me up here.”

Dream was staring at the calendar on his wall with narrowed eyes. “We’re too early,” he said.

Tommy’s head turned so fast that his neck audibly cracked. “What?”

“We’re too early.” Dream pointed at the calendar. “Karl had this on his wall in the future, too - I saw the last date he crossed out before we, uh, we found this place. It hasn’t happened yet. It’s not going to happen for a *while*. ”

“That’s easy to make up,” Karl pointed out.

Tommy groaned. “For fuck’s sake, how hard is it to believe we’re in a fuckin’ time loop? You’re a time traveler or some shit, can’t you do something with your time traveler powers?”

Tommy. . . had a point. Karl *should* be capable of checking if they were trapped in a temporal anomaly; it was just that doing so would be his first act of open rebellion against the Inbetween. He’d have to use some of the power he’d so painstakingly built up, but. . . if these two really were trapped in a time loop, getting them out took precedence. Besides, with the Other Side, he should be able to buy himself enough time to regain what he’d used up.

Mind made, Karl squinted at them. His human eyes didn’t note anything out of the ordinary, so he took it a step further. He’d been sequestering a little bit of power deep in himself, slowly building it and keeping it hidden from the Inbetween’s reach. He drew on it now, stretching the veil of the physical realm thin to *Look* past. The bone-white strings around his wrists twitched in warning, but he hardly even noticed because--

--Dear *Time* .

Most entities that belonged to a timeline appeared to be cut from the same cloth that made up a timeline. Of course, there had been some exceptions Karl had seen in the past-- but that oddity was *nothing* compared to what he was looking at now.

Dream and Tommy were. . . a mess. They weren’t just inhabiting the timeline, they were *woven into* it. In fact, the golden strings that made up this path seemed to *stem* from them and stretch outwards. Whatever was going on with the time loops, Tommy and Dream were at the center of it. To make matters worse, Karl was pretty sure he could see *purple* somewhere in the tangle of gold. Which was all kinds of concerning, because purple was Karl’s color and Karl didn’t remember ever meddling with the *fabric of people’s existence*.

“Well,” he started, then stopped and stared some more. It was only when the shackles around his wrists tightened to a painful degree that he sunk back to normal human vision. “Huh.”

Dream’s lips thinned. “. . . That bad, huh?”

“Yes,” Karl said, then winced at his own bluntness. “I-- I mean, well, I’ve never seen-- anything like that really. I’m *definitely* a lot less skeptical about the time loop now, so, there’s that at least?”

“Then do you know what’s wrong with us?”

Karl chewed on his lip as he tried to figure out the best way to word his explanation. “. . . You know friendship bracelets? The ones they make by tying a ton of knots in strings?”

“. . . Yeeeah?”

“Okay, well, imagine this--” Karl gestured to the space around them, “--the timeline, as a friendship bracelet. It’s made up of a lot of strings right? Except it’s a really *big* friendship bracelet that’s made up of your entire universe. You two. . . are like knots. That’s-- that’s the best image I can come up with, I guess, it’s hard to explain - you’re just. Part of the timeline but not *part* of the timeline - you get carried along with it like everyone else, but you’re also different, like-- like you’re the *string*, too. Whatever you do determines the future, but. . . there’s already an existing future.”

Tommy stared blankly at him. “What?”

“I really don’t know how to explain it more easily,” Karl admitted miserably. “Just know that whatever’s causing this, the two of you are *very* involved. As for how the time loops work - there’s two possibilities. Every time you *reset*, either you’re weaving a completely new loop and the old one’s still there, or. . . you’re *overwriting* the previous loop, in a sense.” Karl spread his hands, unable to provide a definitive answer. “It could be either one. If you want to know for sure, I’d have to Look at the timeline from *outside*, but-- I don’t have enough power right now.”

“‘Right now’,” Dream echoed. “Does that mean you’ll have more later?”

“Yes. . .?” Karl eyed him, still wary of the maybe-villain. “I was. . . *drained* a while back, but I’ve been building up power since then. If you really are in a time loop, you’d have better luck looking for me later in the timeline. You can do that, right?”

Tommy scowled. “Yeah, but-- there’s nothing else you can tell us? Nothing about *why* or *how* we’re here?”

Karl frowned. “I. . . might be able to guess, if you tell me what happened. How did this start? Do either of you remember anything that was happening before the loop started?”

“Nothing *useful*,” Tommy grumbled. “Just hunting Dream down and whatnot.”

Dream cleared his throat. “Uh, my last memory was fighting Tommy. We were in the Arctic, if that helps with anything. . .?”



“Was anyone else there? Was *I* there?”

“Nnnno,” Tommy eked out. He squinted at Karl. “I think. Yeah, no, you weren’t there. Pretty much everyone else was, though--”

“Not George,” Dream said.

“George is never at anything,” Tommy retorted. “Uh, who else wasn’t-- Bad? Bad wasn’t there either, and Wilbur wasn’t because man was fuckin’ *dead* -- yeah, I-- I dunno. There were a *lot* of people. I wasn’t really paying attention.”

Karl turned a hopeful look towards Dream. Dream sighed. “I was more worried about not getting killed or dragged back to prison.”

“... Prison?”

“Not something that’s happened yet, and won’t be happening in this timeline. I’m... reformed now. Learned a lot from the loops.”

“Oh.” Karl glanced between the two of them. “You... really don’t remember anything else?”

Tommy scuffed the floor with his shoe. “We’ve tried. Spent a couple loops sitting in a room wracking our brains for what happened. Came up with fuck all, though - the memories just kinda... fade out and jump to the first loop. Gave up trying, eventually.”

Which was honestly very fair, but it meant that Karl was no closer to narrowing down the causes of the time loop. He knew his future self hadn’t been there, but that just confused him more - if his future self wasn’t involved then why were there *violet strings* attached to Tommy and Dream? Only Karl had that shade of purple in the current generation of tempii, and unless the Inbetween had suddenly gained an ability to color itself-- could the Inbetween evolve? Was it evolving?

Karl filed away *that* terrifying thought for later consideration. “Alright. So... neither of you remember how this started.”

He received headshakes.

“And... neither of you knew about my time traveling before the loops?” More headshakes. “Then... how did you find out I was a time traveler?”

“You were dead,” Tommy said bluntly. Karl paled. “Shit-- no, I mean-- we found this room, yeah? There was-- ash on the walls, and these bloody handprints - it was fuckin’ *creepy*, man. Anyway. We found this place, and then we went up a ladder that was over there--” he pointed to an empty corner of the room, “--which went up to this really nice clearing. And, uh. Your grave was there.”

“Oh.”

“... Yeah.” Tommy shuffled awkwardly. “Has anyone else... come through here?”

“No one other than you two.” Karl paused. “. . . Is someone else going to find this?”

Dream and Tommy exchanged looks. “You were buried,” Tommy said. “So. . . someone had to have. . . you know.”

Which meant someone had come into his library, found his body, buried him, and then disappeared without telling anyone he was dead in the first place. Strange, but not improbable.

Still, something was bothering him. The streaks of ash and the bloody handprint Tommy had described didn’t make *sense*. Physical injuries didn’t travel with him after a Tale - they just showed up as scars. Dirt and soot and other *imperfections* were removed by the universe’s evilest decontamination chamber (read: the Inbetween).

“I have no idea who it could be,” he admitted. “You might have better luck looking for me in a loop that takes place later in the timeline - I might have more knowledge then. Or you could look for whoever was in here with me, they might know something. Just-- keep visiting. Maybe one of these timelines, you’ll catch them burying me or something.”

“. . . That’s fucked up,” Tommy said.

Karl pasted on a wobbly smile. Judging by the downturn of Dream’s mouth, it wasn’t very convincing. “At least I don’t stay dead, right?”

Or maybe he did. That or his existence was overwritten by a different version of himse-- *nope not thinking about that*. All that mattered was that from Tommy and Dream’s perspective, his death wasn’t permanent. Nothing that happened was permanent. As long as they kept that belief, they’d have hope. And as long as they had hope, they had a chance of fixing the timeline and getting everyone, Karl included, out of this mess.

“. . . Yeah,” Tommy muttered. “Still fucked up, though.”

“There’s nothing we can do about it,” Karl reminded him, and was relieved when his voice remained even. “I. . . how many loops have you gone through now?”

“Too many,” the loopers said in unison, and Karl felt a chill crawl down his spine at the flat, haunted look that passed across their faces. Thankfully, it was gone before he could really dwell on it. “How does your traveling work?”

“Oh. Well.” Karl cleared his throat. “It’s not exactly. . . voluntary? I get dragged back in time at random, stay there for a while, then get dragged back to the present.”

Tommy frowned. “Shit deal, man. Do you know what’s causing it?”

Yes, Karl almost said, but he was still wary and hurting after his latest expedition and he wasn’t sure he wanted to tell them more when they could possibly go back in time and use it against him. So. . . “No. I’ve been trying to figure it out.”

“We can help,” said Dream. “It might be connected to whatever’s causing our loops.”

Karl was 80% sure it was not, given the lack of *white* he'd seen when he'd Looked at them. "I'm not sure you *can* help. You can't really. . . follow me back."

"Well we can fuckin' *try*," Tommy insisted. "Maybe going back will get us out--"

"And maybe it messes up the timeline forever. We don't know enough right now to risk it, just-- just wait until future-me can tell you more, okay? He might-- *I* might know more then."

Tommy nodded, hunching in on himself. ". . . So we just. . . come back later?"

"Yes," Karl said firmly. "Hopefully, I'll have enough power in a-- a few months to take a look outside the timeline."

Dream took a deep breath. "Okay. We can do that. Waiting is easy." His gaze met Karl's. "Thank you, Karl. We never actually thought we could get out of here, but now. . ."

"I'm sorry I couldn't do more," Karl said. He pushed himself to his feet, wincing as his sore muscles protested. ". . . If you don't mind, I need to write down all of this before I forget."

"Right. We'll, uh, we'll leave you to it." Dream offered him a hesitant wave before speedwalking out of the room, clearly uncomfortable. After a moment of hesitation, Tommy followed.

Now left alone in his library, Karl found himself staring blankly at the closed doorway. Almost robotically, he shuffled over to his desk, pulled out a blank notebook and a quill, and began the process of recording the events of his last expedition in ***Journal #9***. About halfway through the third page, his hands began to shake. He pressed onward, increasing the size of his letters to make up for their shakiness. Just as he jotted down the last sentence, his legs gave out. He barely had time to slam his quill down on the desk before he was falling. His head glanced off the edge of the desk on his way down and his knees knocked hard against the floor, but he hardly felt it through the static buzzing across his skin. All he could think about was the unknown deadline, the moment where Tommy and Dream looped back and left the rest of them behind.

Maybe he'd be dead by then. Maybe he wouldn't. Maybe he'd be able to *feel* it when he unraveled, when the timeline burst apart and split him into itty bitty pieces so it could rewrite him.

Karl curled against the carved wood of the desk leg, pressed a sleeve over his face, and burst into tears.

## Chapter End Notes

Fanart!

Y'ALL WE GOT ANOTHER [ANIMATIC](#)! THIS TIME FROM THE WONDERFUL

LEGENDARYBLUEORANGES!! It's so accurate to Tommy's characterization I LOVE IT

Yù drew Tubbo's army of furbies: first [adorable](#), then [Oh No](#), Oh [Frick No](#)

Some really cool [remix fanart](#), also by Yù!! :D

Astral is back with more of [The Lad™](#) (personified Inbetween)! (join discord for more Lad content :)) She also made a ton of wonderful [doodles based](#) on [various fic scenes](#)! (Last one's my favorite)

REN WROTE AN ENTIRE [SONG](#) AAAAAA (join the [discord server](#) and go to ot-fanart to hear mason's amazing cover of it too!!)

[some beautiful, hilarious, very angsty dreaxter art](#) by Bella!

Some [really epic glitter duo](#) by alloy! You can really see their dynamic there :D :D :D

[Glitterduo but flower symbolism](#) by Shadow!! I do love flower language so this is super cool to see (^^)

aliendxde tried to create a chronological [timeline](#) for the loops! Absolute legend

New [inspired fic](#) by Cupid\_IsGone!! It's a vigilante! Tommy AU but Tommy gets thrown back in time! :D

I'm sorry if I missed anyone's fanwork - please tell me if I did, or if you'd like me to not mention your fanwork in my fic notes.

### **Loop Notes**

**202.** It was simply unfortunate that Tommy chose to make Wilbur and Schlatt befriend each other in the same loop that Dream invented a DIY coffeemaker. In the end, a good number of server inhabitants ganged up to stage an intervention - resulting in a six-hour high-speed chase involving a handwritten Economics textbook, spray paint, and a lot of frustrated screaming. They were eventually caught when Schlatt had a heart attack whilst dancing on the White House roof, but with a bit of medical attention, his death was averted.

**203.** Ghostbur turned everything on the server blue. Everything. On the plus side, the Eggpire was crushed before it could even take root - apparently the Egg couldn't handle being Blue.

**204.** Spark eventually started taking commissions to modify or make clothing that accommodated extra limbs and hybrid features. They lived pretty happily for the rest of the loop-- except for that one incident where Spark decided to play with matches. We don't talk about that.

# Chapter 42

## Chapter Notes

Belle?? Taking less than a month to update??? Unheard of  
'Tis a plot-free chapter! Enjoy  
(also join the [discord server](#) if you'd like :D)

### **Spotlighted Comments**

**nyanbinary\_87:** tommys right spark is boring. therefore, i will be reading ✨ as Twinkle Sprinkle

**MonetMightExist:** Nah man they're Twilight Sparkle in my heart

**Mixy\_ttwara:** 202 - Ah yes, the loop where Schlatt decided to be a mood

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

## 206.

Foolish stared at the crochet shark.

The shark stared back, its large button eyes unblinking. Foolish studied it for another moment, then reached down and plucked it out of the sand.

“Hey little buddy,” he murmured, turning it this way and that. “Where did you come from?”

The crochet shark, predictably, did not answer. It was an adorable shark, all things considered - not quite anatomically accurate, but its chubbiness could be excused for the sake of cuteness. It fit easily into the palm of Foolish's human-sized hand; if he grew to his full size, he would probably have been able to balance it on the tip of his finger.

“Your name is now Finnius,” Foolish decided. He glanced around the temple. “Hmm. . . if you're going to be staying with me now, you'll need a tour. Here, I'll show you around! Ooo, maybe I can build a little house for you. . .”

He strolled into the temple, the tiny shark cradled in his hand.

---

There was a crochet duck sitting on his beanie.

Well, it was less a “duck” and more a rotund puffball with vaguely duck-like appendages, but the resemblance was there. Quackity eyed it with suspicion, noting how the beanie was

scrunched up around it - almost like. . . a nest.

Okay, that was admittedly kinda cute. Still, there was the looming question of how the thing had gotten there in the first place. Last he checked, his habitation was distinctly lacking in crochet wildlife, and his doors and windows were locked from the inside. Then again, on a server like this, locks did fuck all to keep intruders out. Still, who would break into his house just to leave a tiny *duck*?

Warily, he picked it up and turned it over in his hands. No note, no tags, no identifying marks whatsoever. It was a crochet duck through and through, and he had no idea who had made it. He didn't even know if anyone on the server *did* crochet.

"Huh," he said aloud, then shrugged. For now, he'd take it as an act of goodwill. 'Sides, it would be a shame to throw the thing away just because it appeared under mysterious circumstances. With that in mind, he set it back down on its beanie-nest, then turned towards the chest that contained his spare beanies.

Wouldn't do to begrudge his new friend a home, after all.

---

Sam rubbed his eyes, hoping that the sight before him would disappear. Unfortunately, it appeared that he was indeed awake and not hallucinating.

A tiny, crochet creeper sat amidst the various half-finished redstone mechanisms and knick-knacks littering his workshop table. Sam had fallen asleep halfway through his latest project and awoken with blueprints stuck to his cheek and the fuzzy intruder staring at him.

"This is what I get for not sleeping enough," he muttered, peeling the blueprints off his face. He picked up a screwdriver and prodded the creeper. It tipped over and fell on its side, but otherwise failed to produce any alarming reactions. Thoroughly satisfied that the plush was not a bomb in disguise, Sam set the screwdriver aside and picked the creeper up with his bare hands.

Upon closer inspection, the creeper plush was just that - a tiny, three-inch tall toy. There were no mechanical parts - just yarn - which meant Sam hadn't made it during some sleep-deprived fugue. No, this was someone else's handiwork.

So someone had snuck into his workshop while he was asleep and left a crochet creeper on his desk. Sure. This was his life now.

Sam sighed and placed it on a shelf where it could preside over his workshop. Then he went to review his security footage.

---

Eret lifted the cushions on his throne to find - surprise surprise - yet *another* crochet flamingo.

“Flamingo Number Twelve,” he mused, adding it to his growing collection of crochet flamingos. “Where are you all *coming* from?”

When he’d opened the door of his bedroom that morning, a tiny crochet flamingo had fallen from its perch atop the slightly-ajar door and landed on his head. After the initial three-second panic, he’d realized exactly *what* had attempted to kill him, then realized it had not attempted to kill him at all, *then* realized that there was an identical crochet flamingo sitting outside his door. Watching.

His usual morning routine had yielded another three flamingos, all semi-hidden in various locations. He’d found one sitting with the plates in his kitchen cabinets, another sandwiched between books on his bookshelf, and the third peeking out of his newest pair of boots. Thus, he’d begun an earnest search of his castle, poking around secluded corners and through his drawers for flamingos.

He was not disappointed. Whoever was responsible for this had indeed hidden many, *many* crochet flamingos around the castle - and not all of them were identical. Eret was quite delighted by the different colors and shapes they came in, and resolved to find whoever was responsible for creating them. Perhaps this was Fundy’s work? The fox hybrid *had* previously pranked him by filling his castle with flamingo statuettes.

Looking at the crochet flamingos now decorating his home, Eret found that he really didn’t mind this newest prank at all.

---

Tommy stared at the proverbial *mountain* of crocheted critters arranged at the foot of his bed.

They’d been delicately stacked on top of each other with a precision that spoke of hours of work - which wouldn’t have been frightening if not for the fact that the creatures had *not been there when he went to sleep*.

Tommy was pretty sure he knew who was responsible. Without taking his eyes off of the pile, he reached for his communicator and speed-dialed Dream.

The man picked up on the third ring. “*Hello?*”

“Dream,” said Tommy, “what the *fuck?*”

A pause. Then Dream snorted. “*So you found my present?*”

“I was sleeping, Dream. You left them here while I was sleeping. They were watching me *sleep*.”

“*They watch,*” Dream agreed, like the ominous bastard he was. “*Be careful, lest you earn their judgment.*”

Tommy pulled his communicator away from his ear to stare at it, then decided he was too not-awake to deal with this shit. He hung up on Dream, flipped the mountain of plushies off, then pulled his blanket over his head and went back to sleep.

This was a problem for future-Tommy.

**207.** *(credit to Ayrn and Starsight)*

***Disclaimer: no disrespect towards the elderly intended.***

“So let me get this straight,” Fundy said. “Both you and Dream are actually centuries old.”

Tommy shrugged. “Yup.”

“But you don’t *look* like you’re centuries old--?”

“Aw, Fundy.” Tommy placed a hand over his chest, clearly flattered. “You sure know how to compliment people.”

“I-- no, you really do look sixteen?”

“You know Dream?” Tommy continued, apparently not having heard Fundy. “He’s older than me, a real old man. He wears that mask to hide his wrinkles. I’ve embraced mine. Learned to love myself and shit. Been trying to get him to do it too, but he’s stubborn as fuck. For fuck’s sake, wrinkles aren’t *that* bad. . .”

Fundy stared at Tommy’s smooth, wrinkle-less face, and decided that this line of questioning was not worth pursuing.

---

“Dream, what the fuck is that?”

“Betsy,” said Dream. He patted his walker fondly. “She’s helping me get places.”

“You-- you were literally practicing backflips yesterday?”

“Ah, it was one of my good days.” Dream leaned on “Betsy”, a spark of nostalgia gleaming in his eye. “If it weren’t for Betsy, I wouldn’t be able to get most places on my bad days.”



Good ol' Betsy, always so dependable. *And* she functions as a weapon! Watch!"

Dream proceeded to lift the entire metal walker and swing it into a nearby boulder. The poor rock crumbled into pebbles with a despondent wail.

George took a large step back, distantly aware of the similar wailing in the corner of his mind that still concerned itself with silly things like *logic* and *sanity*. "Wow," he managed to say. "That's. Impressive."

Dream beamed. "Thank you! I designed her to be quite sturdy, and she's held up well over the years. Now if you don't mind, I do believe I've got a Bingo match against Tommy tonight. See you around, George-- and do be sure to go to bed on time. Growing youngsters like you need to sleep more!"

With that, he hobbled away, the wheels on his walker *squeak-squeak-squeaking* down the path. George watched him go, too lost to feel anything besides the vague existential befuddlement one would feel when watching a crouton spontaneously grow limbs and climb out of a salad bowl. Which was to say that he had no idea what was going on, and quite frankly had no desire to know whatsoever.

So George did what George did best. He returned to his house, lay down on his bed, and went to sleep in the hopes that things would make more sense when he woke up.

(Spoiler alert: they did not.)

---

"Tommy. I know you're immortal or something, but *surely* you can understand the value of having independence from the Greater SMP--"

"I have seen more empires fall to their ruin than the years you've lived, boy," Tommy grumbled. "They never last long. Bah! Independence! What's the point of it if you're going to self-destruct in a couple decades?"

"I--" Wilbur stuttered, seemingly at a loss. "Well-- L'Manberg will be different!"

"That's what they all say," Tommy waved a hand, shooing him away. "Now leave me alone. It's time for bed."

". . . It's 5 PM?"

"Already? I've stayed up late today!"

---

Punz inhaled. Punz exhaled. Punz tried very, very hard to keep his blood pressure level.

“Dream,” he said. Calmly. *Very* calmly. “This entire war was *your idea*.”

Dream shrugged. “Eh. I kinda started it to get back at Tommy for cheating in Bingo, but since he doesn’t want to fight. . .”

Yeah, no, Punz’s blood pressure was *climbing* through the roof. He could feel it rising, powered by the approximate fuckton of *sheer disbelief* he was currently experiencing. “Dream. You literally gathered all of us here to *fight*. You laid out a *battle strategy* and *gave us weapons*.”

“And now you don’t have to fight! Go eat a cookie or something. That’s what you kids do these days to celebrate, right? Celebrate the peace! Peace is good! Young people, always so obsessed with violence. . .” Dream trailed off into angry muttering.

Punz just. Could not comprehend this. He was pretty sure he was having an aneurysm. Having the urge to strangle someone was a symptom of that, right?

At that moment, Dream’s communicator buzzed. He fished it out, blinked at it, then scowled. “Ugh. Time for me to take my vitamins. If you don’t mind. . .”

Punz blinked slowly, then robotically nodded, pivoted around, and began walking away.

“And eat that cookie!” Dream called after him. “Or some cake! You need to put some meat on those bones, you’re far too skinny!”

Punz walked faster.

---

“Tommy. . . Tommy, why are you eating leaves?”

Tommy raised his head from the plant he was chewing on. ““Ey Phil,” he said through a mouthful of vegetation. ““M trying ou’ ah new diet.”

“A-- new diet?”

“Mhm.” Tommy chewed, swallowed, then lifted a finger in wise reproach. “When you get as old as me, young man, a healthy diet becomes very important.”

“Tommy,” said Philza, “those are poison ivy leaves.”

Tommy ripped another handful of leaves from the plant and shoved them in his mouth. “Li’e I sai’. A healt’y diet.”

---

Callahan stepped into the Community House and came to a halt. After a moment of mental deliberation, he strolled over to the man huddled in the corner of the room. *Hey. You okay?*

Sapnap stared at him with dead, dead eyes. "I hate it here."

Callahan paused, looked around the room, then looked back at Sapnap. *Dream?* he guessed.

Sapnap didn't say anything, but the twitch in his eyebrow conveyed a distinct sense of unending suffering.

Callahan nodded. *He and T-O-M-M-Y are.* . . he gestured, at a loss for words. *Something.*

An approaching *squeak-squeak-squeak* had them both looking towards the doorway. Dream shuffled into the room, bent over his walker. He brightened when he saw Callahan.

"Callahan! You weren't here when I last came through here!"

*I wasn't,* Callahan agreed. *How are you, Dream?*

"Good! Good! I've just been enjoying the weather! Going for a stroll, you know!" Dream was speaking rather loudly, practically shouting his words. "It's quite beautiful at this time of year! I even got to talk to some people! Though they haven't been saying anything back--pranksters, the lot of them!"

Sapnap took a deep, deep breath. "I did talk to him," he informed Callahan. "He couldn't hear me."

Dream squinted at him, then leaned dangerously forward to cup a hand around his ear. "Eh? Whazzat?"

Sapnap's forehead had a pleasant time acquainting itself with the wall. Repeatedly.

---

"Oh," said Ranboo, looking at the smoking remains of what had once been Tommy's house. "Oh, no."

At his side, Tubbo collapsed to his knees, a scream tearing free from his throat. "Nononono," he gasped, lurching forward to dig at the rubble. "Tommy! *Tommy!*"

Ranboo managed to drag him back before he fell into the wreckage. "Tubbo-- Tubbo, stop, you're going to hurt yourself--"

"He's still in there! We have to get him out--"

“There’s no way he survived th-three creepers.” Ranboo’s voice trembled. “Tubbo-- Tubbo, I think he’s--”

The wreckage *shifted*. Before their disbelieving eyes, a man rose from the ashes, coughing and hacking. Ranboo let go of Tubbo as the other teenager shot to his feet, gaping.

“TOMMY! You’re alive?!”

“Pah!” Tommy spat a glowing ember to the side, then shook out his soot-streaked hair. “You think I got to my age by dying? No!”

“I-I don’t understand,” Ranboo managed to say. “You-- you were *in* there when it exploded, how--”

“Oh, I *was* in there,” Tommy sniffed. “Got bonked mighty nice over the head by that big ol’ panel over there. Some dick calling himself “death” or “grim reaper” or some shit came over with his pretentious-ass knife and tried to collect my soul, but I told him off real good. That’s what you gotta do, kids. Got it? If the suspicious-looking floaty asshole with the dark cloak and the outdated farming tool comes at you, you just scold him away. He’s quite sensitive about ‘your mum’ jokes.”

He plucked at his smoke-stained clothing, wrinkling his nose. “Eugh. Smoke. Terrible for the lungs. Don’t smoke, kids. It’s a shit deal and will ruin your health. Now if you’ll excuse me, I gotta go get this off before I give myself lung problems. Can’t believe the young ones do it *for fun* these days! Back in my day. . .” He picked his way out of the rubble and wandered off, still muttering.

“What the fuck,” Tubbo said faintly.

Ranboo found himself agreeing with the sentiment.

## 208.

It was a beautiful day outside. Not too hot, not too cold, not too windy, not too humid - the sun was shining overhead, the birds were singing, and the air carried the scent of spring. All in all, a perfect day to sit in the shade of a tree with a nice book--

“For the last time, Tommy, we are *not* adding quesadillas to the menu!”

Technoblade flipped a page, ignoring the shouting in the distance. It was none of his business.

“Why not?!”

“This is a *hot dog van*!”

“Quesadillas are just hot dogs but with cheese!”

“I-- *no they're not?*”

*None. Of his business.*

“A quesadilla is a sandwich. A hot dog is a sandwich. They're the same fucking thing--”

“A hot dog is a *taco*,” Wilbur argued. “A sandwich is two pieces of bread with something in between them--”

“Which is a hot dog!”

“Hot dog buns aren't separated!”

“Some of them are! What if I rip my hot dog bun into two, huh? That turns it into a sandwich?!”

“But it's not *naturally* in that state!”

“Well we can *make* it fuckin' 'natural' if you're so against selling quesadillas!”

“We are *not* desecrating hot dogs--”

Technoblade shut his book with an aggrieved sigh and pushed himself to his feet.

“Technically,” he called, “classifyin' a hot dog as a sandwich would be in your best interest..”

Wilbur rounded on him, all indignation and bristling fury. “*No.*”

“What? I'm just sayin'. if you define the hot dog as a sandwich, you can turn your van into a sandwich shop, which means you can sell more stuff.”

“See?” Tommy puffed up, devious grin stretching from ear to ear. “Technoblade gets it. Just give in, Wilbur. A hot dog is a sandwich, which means *more profit for us.*”

“But-- but it's the principal of the matter,” Wilbur protested. “We can't just define *everything* as a sandwich--”

“It can be if you wanted it to be,” Technoblade offered. “If you put three slices of bread together, that's two slices of bread with something between them, which is a sandwich.”

Tommy jumped in. “And by *your* definition, a loaf of bread cut in half would be a sandwich--”

Wilbur scowled. “Not if there's nothing between them--”

“--there's *air* between them, bitch!”

“Then what about pigs in a blanket?! You can't classify *those* as a sandwich, and they're a variation of hot dog!”

Technoblade and Tommy exchanged glances. “I mean. . .” Tommy began, “You *could* classify the roll as two pieces of bread melded together--”

“No,” Wilbur snarled, guttural and viscerally repulsed. Tommy threw up his arms.

“Fine, fine. If you’re so against selling sandwiches, *fine*. But we’re still selling tacos because *apparently* a hot dog is a type of taco!”

“No, it’s a *hot dog van*! We are selling *hot dogs*, and *hot dogs only*!”

“What’s happening? Why are you all shouting?”

Tommy and Wilbur whipped around to face Dream, who’d stumbled across the scene and was now approaching it with the wariness of a man approaching a feral jaguar. “Dream!” Tommy blustered, his veneer of righteous indignation pulling thin as he tried not to laugh. “Is a hot dog a sandwich or a taco?”

“Uh. . .” Dream glanced at Technoblade for help. Technoblade shrugged. “. . . Why?”

“Because Wilbur says we can’t sell quesadillas in hot dog van, but quesadillas are a sandwich, and hotdogs are a sandwich, so it should be fine--”

“For the last fucking time, hot dogs aren’t a sandwich!”

Dream looked between the two of them. “. . . I mean, if you’re worried about selling food that doesn’t fit the description of your van, why don’t you just turn your van into a smoothie van and stick everything in a blender? That way it’ll all be a smoothie, right?”

Dumbfounded silence. Both Wilbur and Tommy turned to stare at him.

“Americans,” Wilbur muttered.

“Americans,” Tommy agreed.

“In our defense, Dream’s kinda out there even for us.”

“Shut *up*, Techno!”

## 209. *the adventures of dreaxter, pt. 11* ([see previous parts of this loop here](#))

Sapnap stormed up to Quackity, seething with fiery rage. “Quackity, you sonuvabitch--”

“Sapnap--”

Sapnap punched him. Quackity staggered back, hands flying up to his face as white stars sparked across his vision. Through the ringing in his ears, he heard shouting.

“Woah! Woahwoahwoah wait!” Tommy got between the two of them, all but shoving Sapnap back to impede his advance. “Sapnap stop! Calm down!”

“You *bastard*!” Sapnap was shouting. “I fucking *defended* you! I thought you could be trusted! You fucking *tortured Dream to death*?! What the fuck is *wrong* with you?! *HOW*

*COULD YOU?!"*

Defensive rage reared up in Quackity's chest. "Like you have any room to talk," he snapped back. The shiner forming over his bad eye was beginning to throb. "You and George and Karl *abandoned* me in El Rapids - you left and you didn't even *tell me!*"

Sapnap faltered, fury momentarily tempered by confusion. Tommy slid out of the confrontation, clearly realizing that this was not a moment to intercede. "You-- what? That's not--"

Quackity's blood pounded in his ears. "You *did*," he snarled. "What, was I not *good enough* for--"

"That's not what we're talking about right now."

George's voice cut through the red haze of rage, leaving Quackity with nothing but desperate fear. Sapnap's anger, however, only seemed to reignite. He stepped forward, tightening his grip on his sword, and Quackity scrambled back. That was *bloodlust* in Sapnap's eyes, and Tommy wasn't stepping in to save him this time--

His foot slipped on viridian-splattered sand. He tried to lash out, but Sapnap wove his blade past Quackity's guard and rammed the flat of it into his knuckles, forcing him to drop his weapon. Quackity fell back, squeezing his eyes shut as Sapnap lunged forward to end it--

"Sapnap."

Sapnap snapped to a halt, the tip of his sword mere centimeters from Quackity's throat. "George," he growled.

"Killing him won't solve anything," said George.

Sapnap didn't turn around. "Won't it?"

"It won't."

Sapnap's eyes glowed magma-bright, rage-fueled flames flaring in their depths. He closed them and took in a deep, shuddering breath. "... I want to kill him, George."

"I know."

"I'm so angry." Silvery smoke hissed between Sapnap's teeth. The air around him wavered like a mirage in desert heat. "I'm so *fucking* angry."

"I know. But killing Quackity won't solve anything." George stepped forward, past Sapnap, and knelt by Quackity's side. Quackity didn't resist as his hands were cuffed, all too aware of the trembling blade near his throat.

When the cuffs had been properly locked, George pressed his fingers under the flat of the blade and lifted it away. Sapnap stumbled back, lowering the weapon with a shaky breath.

With little fanfare, George hoisted Quackity up. As Quackity tottered to his feet and spun around, he got a good look at Dream.

The ghost had gone peculiarly still, and was now staring blankly into the middle distance. Before Quackity could process that, however, he heard a distant yell. He craned his head in its direction, going stiff when he saw the rapidly-approaching silhouettes of Bad and Antfrost.

“Where’s Sam?” Sapnap called as they drew near. His voice was rough, and he refused to look in Quackity’s direction. “Did you leave him at the prison?”

“We saw the coordinates in chat, so we moved Sam to the main cell and ran here in case you needed backup.” Antfrost’s gaze panned over the scene - Dreaxter staring vacantly across the desert expanse, the grim expressions on Tommy, George, and Sapnap’s faces, and the handcuffs around Quackity’s wrists. “. . . Looks like you have it all under control, though. What are you planning on doing with Quackity?”

Sapnap glanced back at Quackity, who glowered at him. Sapnap looked away. “Lock him in the Vault. With Sam.”

“No.”

Heads turned towards Dream. “Dreaxter?” Tommy asked.

“No,” The ghost repeated. His voice was chillingly flat. *“No Vault. That’s how this happened to me in the first place.”*

Quackity went ramrod-straight. “You remember?” he hissed,

Dream’s blank stare passed over him. Quackity shuddered as chills crawled down his spine. “No Vault,” the ghost murmured. *“Rehabilitation. Real rehabilitation. He needs help. Not hurt.”*

“Dreaxter,” Tommy said again.

Dream shook himself. Gray fizzled up and down his body, obscuring him in a cloud of monochrome static. When it cleared, he was once again in a hoodie, uninjured. Glitter, as viscous as blood, dripped from his fingers.

“Woah,” the ghost murmured. He blinked guilelessly at Tommy, then turned to look at the others. *“When did. . . all of you get here?”*

Tommy cleared his throat, drawing the ghost’s attention to him. “Hey, Dreaxter. Why don’t you, uh, come with me? I got something to show you.”

Dream beamed at him. *“Really? What is it?”*

“That’s a surprise.” Tommy made eye contact with George over Dream’s shoulder, glancing meaningfully at Quackity before turning away and motioning for the ghost to follow.

“C’m on, this way.”



“W-wait a minute,” Quackity protested, but Dream was already drifting after Tommy. “Wait! Dream, you--”

“Shut up,” Sapnap hissed, slamming a palm over Quackity’s mouth. “You’ve already hurt him enough, just fucking *stop*.”

Quackity reared back. “You don’t understand,” he spat, shaking Sapnap’s hand away. “He *remembers*. He’s faking his amnesia-- he’s planning something, you can’t--”

“Shut *up*,” Sapnap repeated, loud and angry. Quackity fell silent.

“Dream-- Dreaxter is right, though,” Bad said quietly. “If we just. . . lock them up and leave them to-- to *rot*, we’re no better than them.”

Sapnap bristled, but George spoke before he could protest. “We need to call a trial to decide what happens to them, but while we’re getting everything together. . . we can hold them in the Vault.”

There was a moment of silence as everyone waited for someone to object. Nobody did.

“I’d. . . be willing to act as a witness at the trial,” Antfrost said. He glanced at Bad, who tipped his head. “Bad too. I-I know there might be questions about-- about why we didn’t notice--”

“We’ll need to bring the footage too,” George said. Sapnap shuddered. “Some people won’t believe it without seeing it.”

Bad frowned. “But we can’t hold the trial in the prison-- there isn’t enough room--”

George waved a hand. “I’ll figure out how to move the recordings. In the meantime. . .”

Quackity stumbled forward as a hand settled between his shoulderblades, shoving him towards Sapnap.

“The prison transfer will be easier if he isn’t awake. Knock him out, Sapnap.”

Sapnap’s eyes flashed. The last thing Quackity saw was the pommel of a sword, headed straight for his face.

**210.** *seeing red, pt. 2* ( [see previous part of this loop here](#) )

***TW: Graphic depictions of violence, body horror. This loop series is going to be pure Angst with a Happy Ending. If you’re just looking for crack, there is none to be found here.***

Dream checked his communicator one last time before turning it off, comparing the coordinates Tommy had sent him with the ones on the corner of the screen. It was odd that Tommy had asked to meet him near the entrance to the Egg room, but it wouldn’t be the first time he’d pulled something involving the Egg without telling him. Hopefully, he hadn’t

kickstarted another apocalypse - though Dream was pretty sure he'd already know if that were the case.

A quiet footsteps rang out behind him. He grinned, turning to greet Tommy - and felt the world drop out from under his feet.

Tommy was *red*. Red veins. Red clothes. Red flowers curling through his hair. Only his eyes remained blue, but they were so bloodshot and clouded with terror that they were hardly recognizable. Tears dripped steadily down his chin, tinted crimson.

"T-Tommy?" Dream choked out, caught between horror and revulsion. "What. . . how. . ."

Tommy continued to stare at him. His tears splashed into the grass with a steady *drip-drip-drip*. His jaw twitched minutely, but he otherwise made no move to reply.

Dream swallowed, reaching for his inventory. He *knew* Tommy was immune to the Egg, so how had it managed to infect him? Why were his eyes still blue, and why was he crying? He was clearly in distress, and yet he remained silent.

"Tommy?" he prompted again. "How did you. . . get infected? Why are you here?"

At last, Tommy's jaw creaked open. The sound that burst forth was something inhuman, a mix between a wail of agony and a garbled attempt at speech. Dream watched with horrified fascination as Tommy repeatedly tried to speak, only to seemingly choke on his own words and fall silent. Finally, he turned towards the tunnel that led to the Egg and beckoned for Dream to follow.

Ah. So this was an attempt to infect him as well.

"Can't go with you," Dream said. "Sorry."

Tommy's movements shuddered to a halt. He pivoted to face Dream. His face remained eerily blank even as he tilted his head in question.

"I, uh, have other plans," Dream lied. "I thought you just wanted to talk real quick. I can come back later, when I have more time. . .?"

Tommy studied him for a moment. And then he drew a netherite axe and lurched forward.

Dream rapidly backpedaled, pulling out a shield and sword. He was completely caught off guard by how Tommy moved - fast, unpredictable, his movements jerky and uncoordinated. He lacked the usual experienced grace he fought with, but the strength behind his blows had nearly doubled. He moved as though his body was not his own - like a puppet, limbs not at his own command--

Dream's eyes caught on the pulsating *red* in Tommy's veins, and everything clicked into place.

Oh. Oh *Prime*.

“Tommy,” he gasped, arms shaking as he caught a blow on his shield and shunted it off to the side. “Tommy, can you hear me? You’re-- you’re not in control of your body right now, are you?”

Relief flooded Tommy’s eyes, followed by a fresh wave of tears. His face twisted, straining against the blankness the Crimson forced upon him. A muffled sound squeezed between his teeth, nearly lost in the *crack-thud-crack* of netherite against wood.

Abruptly, the red staining Tommy’s jaw *shifted*. Tommy’s mouth flew open with a gasp, and he took in gasps of air like a drowning man. “Fuck-- *fuck--*” he choked out, even as he brought his axe down upon Dream’s shield again. “Dream, Dream I can’t-- it’s *got me--*”

“I know, Tommy, I *know--*”

“--you have to get it out, Dream, *please*. Kill me if you have to-- I can’t-- help, Dream, *please--*” Tommy lurched forward in an unexpected move, leaving his side wide open. Dream automatically went to take advantage of it, but every instinct he had recoiled violently when he caught Tommy’s eye. Possessed or not, he couldn’t hurt Tommy-- not like this-- but he had to, Tommy had *asked* him to--

His hesitation cost him. Tommy slid past his guard and sunk his axe into his shoulder.

Dream screamed. It was more out of surprise than pain, but the shock still struck him to the core. Tommy screamed with him, incoherent apologies spilling between gargling cries of denial. The Crimson forced him to *twist* the axe before ripping it free a moment later, effectively rendering Dream’s sword arm useless. *Fuck*.

“Nononono, ” Tommy sobbed as he lurched forward again. The Crimson vines curled around his arm unfurled and reached towards Dream’s open wound. “Dr-Dream, please-- *run--*”

Dream was distantly aware of the curses pouring from his lips as he scrambled back, wracking his mind for a way to fix this mess. He came to the grim conclusion that there was nothing he could do at the moment. With his good arm wrecked and his shield cut down to splinters, there was no way he could fight off, much less *kill*, Tommy. There was also no guarantee that killing Tommy would even free him - they had no precedent for this, nothing to go off of.

Tommy sped up, lifting his axe once again. Dream raised his shield to meet it, grunting as he felt the last of its integrity giving way beneath the attack. “Tommy,” he breathed, “I’m going to fix this. Okay? I’ll help you. Just give me a bit. I promise.”

Hope sparked in Tommy’s eyes, a dull ember flaring back to life. Terror bloomed alongside it as he raised his axe again, primed to take out Dream’s leg. Without hesitation, Dream flung the remnants of his shield at Tommy’s feet, forcing him to jump back. Then he turned and sprinted for the Prime Path, one hand clamped over his bleeding shoulder.

He didn’t look back when Tommy’s unsettlingly quick footsteps hit the staircase behind him. He didn’t look back when Tommy’s voice cut off, replaced by the horrid sound Dream now identified as the Crimson attempting to speak through a throat it did not have full control of.

He didn't look back at Tommy, because if he looked back, he wouldn't be able to leave him behind.

So Dream ran. Dream ran for the sanctuary of Church Prime, and he didn't look back.

## Chapter End Notes

Next update may take a while because I'm entering exam season. Wish me luck-- and good luck to everyone who's also taking exams! You got this (^ ^)

Fanart!

Look at this amazing art of ✨(Spark) by lunarskyl! It's themmmmm :D

There's even more [tommy and dream fusion](#) fanart by randomguy1!! The design and little details are just so interesting I am in awe--

Fawn drew a SUPER COOL [remix!tommy](#) aaaaaa /pos

They also drew some [angsty glitterduo content](#)!!! I love their art style so much asjdfj go like their other art too it's severely underrated

This adorable drawing of [glitterduo as frogs](#) is by Shadow!! It's so cute hsdlfjlsk

This awesome [cover art for on temporizing](#) by EclipseOfNight!! go give it some kudos (^ ^)

ALSO look at this [poem](#) by SugarSpice2022! It's really well-written!!

### **Loop Notes**

**126.** People begin bonding over their tiny crochet friends, leading to server-wide peace. It becomes commonplace to see people carrying a little crochet creature with them - perhaps tucked into their shirt collar, or sticking out of their pocket. From time to time, new crochet creatures show up in people's houses, but no one can figure out who's making them. To keep suspicion off of him, Dream makes a little cactus for himself. Meanwhile, Tommy begins sewing accessories for the creatures. Karl is overjoyed when his tiny frog gets a witch hat.

**128.** Is a hot dog a sandwich? Is tea a soup? Is ketchup a smoothie? Is our life a lie?

# Chapter 43

## Chapter Notes

Announcement: we're now over 200k words what even is my life

hi y'all thank you for being patient. I know a lot of you are going Through It right now, so just to let you know: you're so awesome pls never forget that. there are people out there (including me!) who are so grateful that you exist (^ ^)

sorry for taking so long this chapter. i'm also currently going thru some stuff (getting better now dw :D). I'm sorry if this isn't up to par, but it is longer than usual (over 10k words holy guacamole). hope you enjoy <3

Also advertisement for two crack time travel oneshots I wrote during my impromptu hiatus: [everyone except wilbur and schlatt traveling to the past](#) and [karl saving the world](#)

### **Spotlighted Comments**

**InsanityGanon:** Loop 207: Tommy: Your Mum's so skinny she turned sideways and disappeared.

Literal skeletal embodiment of Death: Okay. Imma head out.

**Morning\_Frost:** Why does Dream in loop 208 seem like the type to pour milk before cereal

**chrryrdcndy:** every food item listed in that section according to The Cube Rule of Food:

quesadilla - sandwich

hot dog - taco; if you tear the bun then it's a sandwich

3 slices of bread - sandwich

a loaf of bread cut in half - sandwich

pig in a blanket - sushi

dream's suggestion - an abomination, that's what. i suppose it, stuffing, and bread

pudding go in their own category like "salad" or something

**Lazy\_waffles:** Tea is British soup you cannot convince me otherwise

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

### **211. (credit to Sahaan and Blueleaf)**

“I hate this,” Dream grumbled. “Hate it so much.”

“You promised,” Tommy gleefully reminded him. Dream scowled at him, tugging down his sleeves. The hoodie he wore was a pale, desaturated red - quite the contrast to his usual neon green.

“Do I have to? There’s a lot of plant life on this server—”

“You lost the bet, you face the consequences.”

Dream groaned. “My *eyes* are green, Tommy. Am I supposed to be allergic to them too now?”

“Use contacts!” Tommy shoved a tiny plastic case into his hands. Dream peeled it open to see two hazel-brown contacts staring back at him.

“You expect me to wear these for the *rest of the loop*?”

Tommy shrugged. “We’re already far enough in to achieve server-wide peace, so it’s not like this loop will last much longer. All you gotta do is not touch anything green, no gloves allowed. Not that hard.”

Dream shut the contacts case with a resigned sigh. “I hate you.”

“Woah, Dream, look at that!” Tommy made a show of looking shocked and pointing over Dream’s shoulder. Dream turned to see nothing of particular interest, and when he turned back to Tommy in confusion, was met with a vicious grin. “It’s all the fucks I don’t give!”

Dream slowly raised a hand and pointed at him. “I hope you trip and fall on your face.”

“Don’t care. Go put in your contacts.”

“This is going to go *so* badly.”

“Yeah, and it’s going to be fucking *hilarious*.”

“I hate you.”

“I know! Now *go put in your contacts!*”

---

“Dream, what the fuck are you wearing?”

Dream looked down. “Uh. A hoodie?”

“No, like—” Sapnap gestured at him, apparently struggling to articulate the change. “*That*. It’s. Red.”

“... Yes?”

“What happened to your green one?”

Dream shrugged. “I felt like changing up the colors.”

“You—” Sapnap’s incredulous expression morphed into open bafflement. “What happened to your *eyes*?”

Dream shrugged again and very conspicuously shifted his mask to cover his face. “Nothing happened to them.”

“No, seriously dude— did they change color or something?”

“No. . .?”

Sapnap stared at him. Dream stared back, raising an eyebrow in silent question as the silence dragged on. At last, Sapnap conceded defeat, unable to gain an advantage when Dream refused to acknowledge the change.

“Whatever, man,” he muttered.

Dream withheld a snort and turned away, silently congratulating himself on successfully gaslighting Sapnap. The moment someone put two and two together, there would be a whole host of people attempting to exploit his “allergy” to green. And unfortunately, per Tommy’s rules, Dream would have no choice but to go along with it. His only option was to hide this “weakness” until he couldn’t anymore.

As it turned out, keeping a secret tended to be difficult when the other person in the know actively attempted to sabotage said secret.

---

It began, because of *course* it did, with a game of Uno.

Dream should’ve *known* the game nights Tommy organized would be a front for *something*, but he’d assumed the other looper was just trying to bring the server closer together or make it more peaceful or— just taking advantage of the whole “ah yes we finally established server-wide peace” thing. Unfortunately, what he hadn’t realized was that a lot of games— and he meant a *lot*— involved the color green in some way, shape, or form. He’d barely managed to beg his way out of Twister by virtue of Sapnap arguing that his flexibility gave him an unfair advantage. Somehow, though, Puffy and Sam managed to rope him into a game of Uno— and Dream, foolishly thinking he would be fine without Tommy actively participating in the game, had gone along with it.

What he hadn’t counted on was Tommy dropping into the game and declaring himself the card dealer, because *clearly* Dream was a known cheater at Uno and the card deck couldn’t be left unattended. Dream had tried to murder him by glaring alone, but Tommy failed to combust into flames. He just cheerily began to distribute cards while Dream tried frantically to think of a way out of the situation without arousing suspicion or worry, only to come to multiple dead ends.

The first few cards he gained weren't green. Dream remained on edge, but as the card distribution continued and a distinct lack of any solidly green cards made their way into Dream's hands, he began to relax.

Which was a mistake, because just as the deck reached its halfway point, Tommy handed Dream a green card. Dream took it without thinking, then paused. Tommy raised an expectant eyebrow. Dream gave himself a moment to regret every life decision he had ever made, then dropped the card and fell back with a very loud and over-the-top "AAAAAAAAAAAAARGH."

Every head in the vicinity turned towards him. Dream made a show of clutching his hand to his chest and glowering at Tommy, who was too busy trying not to laugh to deescalate the situation. The resulting scramble of concerned friends only worsened Tommy's hysteria—and by proxy, Dream's desire to *strangle him*.

"I'm fine," he grumbled, shaking the hovering hands away. "No, really, stop. I'm *fine*. I just touched something by accident."

Sam, one of the players crowded around him, followed his gaze to the card on the floor. ". . . An Uno Reverse?"

"A *green* Uno Reverse," Dream emphasized. At the blank stares he received, he shrugged self-consciously. "I, uh, can't touch green."

"Dream. You used to *wear* green. Your eyes are—" Sam blinked at him, did a double take, and shook his head. "—I thought they were green?"

"Yes, well." Dream cleared his throat, silently cursing himself for forgetting to keep his mask on. "I had to make some changes after, uh, my. . . *allergy* appeared."

"Your allergy to green."

"Yes."

"The color green."

"Yes."

"That's. . . not possible."

"Sam. Why the *fuck* would I make something like this up?"

Sam visibly struggled for some form of justification, buffered, and gave up. "But— you weren't allergic to green before."

"I wasn't."

"Then how. . .?"

Dream shrugged and very pointedly did not glare in Tommy's direction. "Dunno. Maybe it was something I ate."



Under any other circumstances, the look on their faces would have made him laugh. As it was, Dream was too busy chanting *inner peace, inner peace* so he wouldn't do something drastic. Like opening up a new window in the Community House with Tommy's forehead.

"That's. . . not how allergies work?"

"Do you have a better explanation?"

The answering silence was soon broken by Tommy's 'coughing fit'.

---

"DREAM LOOK OUT!"

Dream yelped as something slammed into his side. He staggered back, arm windmilling as he tried not to fall over. He regained his balance just in time to see Technoblade dropkick a turtle that had been meandering its way over to him. It went flailing head over tail through the air.

Technoblade spun towards him, face grim and shoulders tense. "Did it hurt you?"

"Techno what—"

"The turtle," said Technoblade. "Did it hurt you?"

". . . Technoblade, it's a *turtle*."

"You can't touch green things."

Dream looked up towards the sky in the hopes that it would somehow relieve the sheer *disbelief* he was experiencing. It did not.

". . . The turtle didn't hurt me," he said, still staring up into the sky so he wouldn't break down laughing. Or crying. It was a bit hard to tell these days.

"You sure? You're actin' weird."

Definitely crying. "I'm sure," Dream assured the vaguely rabbit-shaped cloud drifting overhead. "I think I'm just gonna. . . go. Inside. To where there's less green things." He spun on his heel and speedwalked towards the house before any further conversation could ensue.

"DON'T STEP THERE!"

Only several decades' worth of reflex saved Dream from tripping over his shoes and faceplanting in the snow. He looked askance at Technoblade, who pointed sheepishly down at the patch of ground he was about to step on. A cluster of pine needles lay curled amidst the snow, likely carried into the tundra by the wind.

“ . . . There’s a leaf.”

Dream closed his eyes and silently vowed to make Tommy *pay*.

---

“I don’t get how someone can be *allergic to green*.”

“Some kind of magic? A curse?”

“But what kind of spell would make someone allergic to a *color*?”

“Then a genetic mutation—?”

“No, I talked to Ponk - there’s just - medically no way it’s possible.”

“Maybe it’s the Egg?”

All eyes turned towards Fundy, who had spoken for the first time since the conversation began. “Egg?” Sam asked.

“You know. The thing that made Skeppy act weird a couple months back. It turned that blue wool block red, right?”

Sapnap snapped his fingers. “Dream used to wear green, but after he became— *allergic*, he started wearing red. The color might be a coincidence, but. . .”

Puffy frowned. “You think the Egg made him allergic.”

“It makes sense,” Fundy said. “He hasn’t been acting how Skeppy has, but the Egg might be trying to be more subtle with him, or something. I dunno.”

“Skeppy snapped out of it when we sealed the Egg away, but that obviously won’t work for Dream,” Sam mused. He hesitated. “I . . . know we’ve kept it around to experiment with, but. . . at this point it’s probably best to just get rid of it altogether.”

He looked around at the other four, waiting for an objection. None arose.

“Alright,” said Sam. “Let’s run it by the others first, and then we can plan an attack—”

“Attack?”

Five heads whipped towards Dream, who was standing in the doorway of Technoblade’s house. His eyes darted between them. “What were you talking about?”

“Nothing!” Puffy said, a little too forcefully. “Just, uh, what do you think about eggs?”

“Um.” Dream squinted at her. “I . . . like them, I guess? Why?”

Puffy smiled, but the edges of it were strained. “Curiosity!”

Dream nodded slowly. “. . . If you’re planning a prank involving eggs,” he said, “please try to hit Tommy with one.”

“We can do that!”

“Great,” said Dream. “Technoblade, I’m stealing one of your swords.”

“Heh?”

“I’ll give it back later, promise. I just need to. . . borrow it for a bit.”

Technoblade narrowed his eyes. “What for?”

“Oh, you know.”

Dream proceeded to absolutely *not* elaborate on what exactly Technoblade was supposed to know. There was a full minute of awkward silence as he shuffled past the gathered players, grabbed a decorative sword from the rack on the wall, then shuffled back out. Five sets of eyes followed him with suspicion as he crossed the threshold and stepped out into the snow.

The moment the door clicked shut, Puffy spun to face the others. “It’s definitely the Egg.”

Tellingly, nobody disagreed.

---

***Group Chat: dream christmas ornament arc***

<Awesamdude> so we’ve confirmed that the egg made Dream allergic to green

<BadBoyHalo> o\_0

<BadBoyHalo> wait how?? I thought we sealed it up?

<Awesamdude> no idea. but now we know what we have to do

<TommyInnit> aight whats the plan

<Tubbo\_> letss blow it up

<Awesamdude> i was going to say drown it in green paint

<CaptainPuffy> sam what??

<Awesamdude> but yes, tnt is probably a safer bet.

<Tubbo\_> :D

<Technoblade> *We could go even safer and use withers too.*

<Tubbo\_> *D:*

<TommyInnit> *absolutely fucking not*

<WilburSoot> *KEEP YOUR WITHERS AWAY FROM THE MAINLAND*

<WilburSoot> *ONCE WAS ENOUGH*

<Awesamdude> *thank you for the offer, but I think the tnt is enough*

<Technoblade> *None of you appreciate glorious battle tactics.*

<CaptainPuffy> *I think its more that we appreciate less property damage*

<Technoblade> *Semantics.*

<Awesamdude> *It might take us a little while to gather enough tnt for something as large as the egg.*

<Awesamdude> *in the meantime, avoid Dream. we don't need a repeat of that episode with skeppy*

<BadBoyHalo> *but dream hasn't been trying to drag anyone to the egg or grow vines on them*

<BadBoyHalo> *its just the color of his hoodie*

<Sapnap> *JUST the color of his hoodie. the hoodie he hasnt changed in like 5 YEARS*

<BadBoyHalo> *...you have a point*

<Awesamdude> *better to be safe than sorry. just make sure he can't suddenly grab you or anything*

<Awesamdude> *just until we destroy the egg*

<TommyInnit> *well boys*

<TommyInnit> *if anyone needs green shirts lemme know*

---

“Is it just me, or is everyone suddenly wearing green?”

“It’s for Saint Patrick’s day,” Skeppy informed him, hands shoved in the pockets of his lime green hoodie. Dream squinted at him.

“... Isn’t that in March?”

Skeppy just shrugged. Dream squinted harder.

“This isn’t a prank on me or something?”

“No.”

“‘No’ as in ‘no it isn’t a prank’ or ‘no it is a prank’?”

“No,” Skeppy repeated helpfully. Then he added, “You know you can’t trust creepy voices in your head, right?”

Dream blinked at the non sequitur. “Erm. What?”

“Voices in your head.” Skeppy pointed at his own head, as though that would somehow clear things up. His face was solemn, nothing like the borderline-impish expression he usually wore when executing a prank. “You can’t trust ‘em.”

“... Okay?”

Skeppy sighed and muttered something that sounded suspiciously like *of-fucking-course you can’t talk someone out of mind control*, then brightened up and turned his usual smirk on Dream. “Anyway, I’m gonna go steal Bad’s sink. Wanna come?”

“The. The entire sink?”

“Yeah. You wanna join me?”

Dream looked at Skeppy - all two feet of him - and tried to imagine him parading a sink nearly thrice his height out of Bad’s mansion. “Not. . . today?”

“Your loss,” Skeppy grumbled, but his voice held no heat. Then he perked up and pointed at Dream. “And no telling Bad that I was the one who took it, got it?”

At a loss for words, the only answer Dream could give him was a painfully awkward thumbs-up. Skeppy, satisfied with this, turned on his heel and skipped away.

Dream stared after him, feeling as though he had missed something very, very big.

---

“You know,” said Dream, “I feel like this might be a targeted attack.”

“I have no idea what you’re talking about,” said Fundy, perfectly straight-faced.

Dream looked at him, then looked at the newly-built house they were standing in front of. It happened to be painted in the most eye-searing shade of vomit-green Dream had the displeasure of witnessing, and was also surrounded by a very large, very well-taken-care-of lawn.

“Is this your version of a restraining order?” Dream asked, then, “Tommy paid you to do this, didn’t he.”

“I have no idea what you’re talking about,” Fundy repeated, but the way his poker face started to crack was answer enough.

---

Dream took a deep, deep, breath and resisted the urge to massage his temples “. . . What exactly was your end goal here?”

“What do you mean?” Wilbur asked, sweating profusely. He, Quackity, and Schlatt were all clustered in the doorway of the Community House. A vibrant green line was painted across the threshold, separating Dream from the other three.

“The line,” Dream said flatly. He pointed at it. “Why?”

“*Why*—?” Quackity spluttered, incredulous. “You were *chasing* us!”

Dream did not recall doing this. As far as he was aware, he’d stumbled across the other three on his morning jog. They’d seen him coming and proceeded to run in the opposite direction - coincidentally along his jogging route.

. . . Yeah, he could see how that would be seen as *chasing*. But then *why* were they shielding themselves from him with *green paint*?

“Green is your weakness,” Schlatt added. “You can’t touch it.”

Dream lost the battle to his urges and reached up to rub at his temples. “. . . You do know that I can just step over the line, right?”

Five seconds of shocked silence ticked by. Then:

“OH FUCK HE CAN STEP OVER IT,” Quackity yelled. The three men then initiated a panicked scramble reminiscent of a stampede of deranged chickens.

Dream watched them go with an expression of great longsuffering, then turned on his heel and resumed his jog in another direction.

---

“BEGONE, DEMON,” Tommy shouted, waving a stick of celery like a crucifix. “THE POWER OF HEALTHY FOOD COMPELS YOU!”

“Yeah, uh, begone?” said Tubbo, also holding out a stick of celery. He gave it an experimental wave in Dream’s direction, then glanced at Tommy. “Are you sure this works?”

Dream just stared blankly at the two of them. “Why,” he said flatly.

“BEGONE,” Tommy repeated, lips twitching as he tried very hard not to burst out laughing.

Dream looked at Tubbo, who yelped and pointed the stick of celery at him like a magic wand. Dream looked back at Tommy. Dream took a deep, deep breath.

“I’m done,” he told Tommy. “I’m going to go camp out in the woods and become a hermit.”

“But there’s green in the forest,” Tubbo pointed out. “Grass and leaves and everything.”

Dream, perfectly deadpan, took the celery stick from his hands and broke it in half.

“Oh,” said Tubbo.

“Goodbye,” said Dream. He dropped the celery stick, swiveled on his heel, and calmly walked away.

“Wait,” Tubbo said behind him. “Wait, so he *isn’t* allergic to green?”

“It’s probably a cover for him being allergic to purple,” said Tommy.

Dream walked faster.

## **212.** *(credit to hexx, Thanatos, Nektahar)*

“You’re not supposed to be here.”

Fran barked, her tail wagging at near-lightspeed. The black panther sitting at her side *cheeped* and butted his legs with its head. Sam stared down at them, then surveyed the prison hall as though it would somehow explain the presence of the two animals.

“How did you even get in here?” he asked when no obvious explanation presented itself. As expected, neither animal responded. Sam didn’t really know what he was expecting, really. Maybe the lack of fresh air was getting to his brain.

Normally, a breach like this would’ve sent him into a panic. Normally, he’d have thrown intruders out or killed them outright. Normally, he’d have locked down the entire prison and curled up in a corner to hyperventilate quietly.

But, well. . . he was tired. Drained. Dream had already escaped, and he'd spent the past two weeks holed up in the prison, alternating between obsessively checking the security measures and curling up under his desk as he waited for Dream to come for him. Waited for Dream to get his *revenge*. And, truth be told, Sam had always had a soft spot for animals. Faced with Fran and the panther she'd seemingly befriended—

He stepped around the desk and kneeled in front of the animals. "You need to leave," he told them. His voice was hoarse and cracked at the edges. "It's not safe here."

Fran barked and assaulted his face with a series of doggy kisses. The panther sat back on its haunches and *merped* in a distinctly rebellious manner. An amused huff rose in Sam's throat, but he swallowed it and rose to his feet. "Come on," he told the animals, ushering them towards the portal. "You should go."

The animals allowed him to shoo them out. It was only once they were *out* of the portal that Sam encountered problems.

"I have to go back in," he told Fran. The dog kept her jaw clamped firmly on the leg of Sam's pants. The panther, for its part, had deigned to simply lie down across his feet.

He sighed. "Fran. Unnamed panther."

Neither animal budged. Fran let out a pitiful whine through the cloth in her mouth.

Sam crouched down so he could slide his hands under the panther's ribs and dislodge it. It yowled and swiped halfheartedly at him, its claws retracted so as not to harm him. A flash of brown caught his eye and he paused in his attempts to gain freedom.

A simple leather band wrapped around the panther's foreleg. Sam squinted at the crude letters scratched into it. "Licorice," he muttered. The name was rather incongruous for a predator, but the absurdity just seemed to *fit*, somehow. "That's an. . . interesting name."

The panther offered him a feline grin, then proceed to undo any progress Sam had made by rolling over and once again flopping its not-inconsiderable weight across Sam's boots. Fran, for her part, had moved past biting Sam's pants and had now wrapped herself around Sam's legs.

Sam considered his options. He could go back into the prison, lock it down, and wallow in his misery while he waited for a prisoner that might never return. Or. . . he could listen to Fran and Licorice. Leave the prison. Leave his post as the Warden and return to being just Sam.

Sam looked down, met Fran's eyes, and made his decision.

It took an hour for him to key up the security measures and shut down the prison. Fran remained at his heels the entire time, sometimes getting underfoot in her excitement at being reunited with him. Licorice, meanwhile, found a suitably high perch (the stairs) and proceeded to lounge there, watching Sam's proceedings with half-lidded eyes. At long last,



Sam found himself at the entrance to the prison. He glanced back to make sure Fran and Licorice were following, then plunged into the portal.

A cool breeze swept in from the sea as he stepped into the open world. Sam took a deep breath, relishing the feel of the wind against his face. For a moment, he just *basked* in it, taking in the wonder of a world unbounded by blackstone and terror. Only when he felt he'd drunk his fill did he turn to his companions, both of whom were watching him with guileless curiosity.

"I've heard something about Quackity building a new nation," he told his companions. "You think he might be willing to take us in?"

Licorice purred. Sam huffed out a laugh.

"Worth a shot," he agreed. With one last glance at the blackstone monolith that had imprisoned him for so long, he turned to face the horizon.

---

"Licorice."

"That's his name."

"You named a giant black panther '*Licorice*,'" Ranboo said faintly.

Tommy raised an eyebrow at him. "Yeah? He's cool with it, so."

"*Licorice*," Ranboo repeated. The panther in question lifted its head to peer at him, then bared its fangs in a ghoulish impression of a smile. Ranboo paled and took a few steps back.

Tubbo had no such reservations, having crouched down in front of the panther and thereby leaving his neck in easy biting distance. While Ranboo tried not to have a heart attack, Tubbo leaned in to peer at the panther's mouth. "Woooah, you've got sharp fangs! That's so cool!"

A pleased purr rumbled in the panther's chest. Tubbo beamed. "He likes me! Hi Licorice—do you want beef jerky? I made some yester— *woah*—"

Licorice had immediately lunged for the outstretched food, knocking Tubbo over and sending Ranboo straight back into a panic. Tommy hastily lurched forward and pulled the panther away. "Hey— *woah*— Licorice we've talked about this— no sitting on people, you'll crush them—"

Licorice hissed at him. It was a disconcertingly housecat-like action for a seven-foot-long panther. Tommy groaned.

"*No*, Licorice."

The giant cat sniffed and got to its paws, then turned tail and flounced away. Tommy watched it go with the expression of a long-suffering parent.

“I would’ve been fine,” said Tubbo.

“Your ribs would not have been fine,” Tommy deadpanned. “Trust me. He’s heavier than he looks.”

The panther actually stopped mid-stride, turned around, and sent them all such an *offended* look that Tubbo found himself cackling. Tommy rolled his eyes.

Ranboo cleared his throat, eyes sliding between Tommy and the animal disappearing between the snow-laden trees of Snowchester. “Is it okay to just. . . let him go off like that? Alone?”

“Oh, yeah. He’ll find his way back eventually.” Tommy’s nonchalant confidence forestalled any doubts his friends would have expressed. “He always does. Like a fuckin’ *parasite*. Always stealing my steak, the bastard— can’t fuckin’ *cook* to save his life—”

“He’s a panther,” Tubbo pointed out.

“. . . Yeah? I know that?”

“Panthers can’t cook.”

“That’s what they want you to think,” Tommy muttered.

“It’s. . . nice that you’ve got some protection,” Ranboo interjected quietly. “I’m, uh, glad, I guess. As long as you’re sure he won’t eat you. . .”

Tommy squinted at him. “Protection?”

“Against Dream.”

The air grew somber. “I’ve been keeping a lookout for him, but he’s either dead or really good at hiding,” Tubbo said. “None of the others have seen anything either— it’s been two weeks since he broke out, *surely* he’s planning *something*. . .”

“Right,” said Tommy, his voice strained and wavering at the edges. His lips twitched. “Definitely. Definitely planning something.”

Tubbo sent him an odd look. “. . . Tommy, are you sure living alone is safe? You can still move into Snowchester—”

Tommy waved him off. “I’ll be fine. I’ve got traps in place, and worse comes to worst, Licorice will— uh— *protect* me from— *ha*— from Dream.”

Tubbo and Ranboo exchanged looks. “Okay,” Tubbo said at last. “But, just— if you need anything—”

“I’ll let you know, big T. Don’t worry about it.”

---

Technoblade peered down at the miserable puddle of black fur. “. . . You’re not a polar bear.”

The panther peeled one green eye open to glower at him, then shut it again and curled deeper into Steve’s side. The polar bear didn’t seem to mind the very large, very dangerous predator intruding on his personal space. Technoblade sighed.

“Where did you even come from? Aren’t you supposed to live in warmer biomes?”

The panther growled. Technoblade shifted his hold on the bucket of salmon in his grip so he could raise a hand in surrender. “I’m just sayin’. You’d be less cold if you stayed in the forests, you know?”

The panther ignored him. Technoblade reflected on the fact that he was talking to a giant cat like he expected it to understand him, then shrugged it off. Couldn’t be as bad as talking to the voices in his head.

“I hope you’re not stayin’,” he told the animal. “I’m not feedin’ both of you.”

The panther didn’t raise its head, but the way its tail shifted implied a distinct sense of *unimpressed*. Which was frankly insulting and completely uncalled for.

“Steve,” he called, shaking the fish bucket. “Food.”

Steve grunted, raised his head about an inch off the floor, then laid it back down and stared longingly at the salmon.

“C’mon. Get up.”

Steve begrudgingly crawled to his feet. The panther made a noise of protest and struggled to its paws, sticking to Steve’s side like a particularly stubborn lint roller.

“Shoo,” Technoblade ordered, but there was no real heat in his voice. When the panther failed to shoo, he gave up and tossed the salmon in the general direction of Steve’s panther-free side.

The panther shamelessly snaked out a paw and swiped a fish for itself. The polar bear didn’t even try to stop it.

“Stop that,” Technoblade scolded. Chat began a chant of *pet cat pet cat pet cat it can bite your face off that’s so cool pet cat* in his head. The panther did not, in fact, stop stealing Steve’s food, nor did Steve stop letting it steal his food. Between the two hungry predators and an appreciation for having all ten fingers, Technoblade was forced to concede defeat.

“You win this round,” he told the panther. The panther flicked its tail and tossed its head, looking distinctly smug. “Hey. Just this round. No freeloading off of my fish, go get your own

next time.”

The panther *merped* condescendingly, nudged Steve in farewell, and pranced off into the snow. Technoblade watched it go with a faint sense of bafflement, wondering why he felt like he’d just been owned by a giant, entitled housecat.

Chat’s raucous cackling remained supremely unhelpful.

---

“You can’t be drinking this much coffee, man. It’s bad for your heart.”

“I need it,” was all Sam said. Quackity huffed.

“Look, Sam, I know you like it, but we’re in the middle of a fucking *desert*. Importing coffee is a *pain*.”

“I *need* it.”

“Fine. Okay. Sure. You *need* coffee. What could you *possibly* need it for?”

At that moment, two animals skidded into the kitchen. Quackity sidestepped with barely a thought, well-used to dodging around the playfights and chases Sam’s furry companions undertook around Las Nevadas. The dog chased the panther several times around the table before tackling it. They then proceeded to roll about for several seconds before breaking apart and scrambling to a stop at Sam’s side.

Sam obligingly peeled one hand from his coffee mug to pat the animals. “I need it for them.”

“Your. . . pets?” When Sam just took a long drag from his coffee mug, Quackity crossed his arms. “Sam, you’re not. . . feeding them coffee, right?”

“Of course not,” said Sam. “I just mean that they— well. I love them, but Prime knows they’re a handful.”

Fran barked. Licorice echoed her. Quackity opened his mouth, shut it, then shook his head like he was trying to shake water out of his ears.

“. . . Sam, did that panther just bark?”

“Yes,” said Sam.

“That is a *panther*, Sam.”

Sam stared into his cup. “I know.”

“A *giant cat*. ”

“I know.”

“Cats meow.”

“They usually do that, yes.”

“The panther just *barked*, Sam.”

“I am aware,” Sam said distantly. “Just don’t question it. It’s best if you don’t.”

“Woof,” went Fran.

“Woof,” went the panther.

Quackity stared at the three of them like they were all insane. Which was probably true for Sam, given the sheer number of headaches his animal companions had managed to generate. Fran was a sweetheart on her own, but when she was with Licorice. . .

It was just best to say that Sam had developed a heavy caffeine dependence.

---

“Tommy, we have a raccoon problem.”

Tommy side-eyed Jack. “. . . Is that supposed to be an insult? Because if it is, I need to know so I can punch you in the face.”

“Wh— *no!* We actually have a raccoon problem!” Jack stabbed a finger in the general direction of the hotel dumpsters, eyes wild behind his shades. “I went out to toss some bags and there was a *giant fucking raccoon* digging through our trash!”

“Just shoo it away—”

“And get my face clawed off?!”

Tommy sighed. “Look, I’ll get it away. Just show me where the raccoon is and I’ll chase it off.”

Jack begrudgingly led Tommy around the side of the hotel. The sun was setting, casting the area into deep shadow. Tommy squinted into the darkness, straining for a glimpse of said raccoon.

The darkness *shifted*. An inky shape separated itself from the silhouette of the trash piled into soon-to-be-landfills and turned towards them, revealing two luminous green eyes.

Jack and Tommy stared at the panther. The panther responded with a slow, languid blink.

“. . . I don't think that's a raccoon, Jack."

"What the fuck," Jack whispered, still staring at the panther. "What the *fuck* is *that*—"

"Mrow," went the panther. Both humans watched, frozen, as it leaned down and extricated a piece of foil from the pile of trash. Then it proceeded to purr happily before bounding away, its shiny prize clutched in its teeth.

The ensuing silence could best be described as *dumbfounded*. "What. . . just happened?" Jack asked.

Tommy's expression could best be described as one part disbelief, one part unwilling amusement, and all parts utterly done with life. "Yeah, uh, don't worry about him. He won't hurt you."

Jack's expression went from semi-relieved to downright incredulous. "You *know* that thing?"

"His name's Licorice. He likes shiny things."

Jack stared at him for a full ten seconds. Then he turned back to the trash piles, as though searching for answers within. They had none to divulge.

". . . So," he said at last. "A demonic creature is going to rifle through our trash sometimes and steal shiny things. You've named him Licorice. Is that right?"

"Uh. He's a panther, actually. . .?"

Jack nodded. "Fuck you," he said, with remarkable levels of calm. "Fuck this. You can take out the trash yourself. I don't care if you dock my pay, I'm not risking my life to throw away *trash*."

"He doesn't bite! Usually!"

The look Tommy received would have killed a lesser man. As it was, Tommy conceded to taking out the trash in Jack's stead.

Dream later received a strongly-worded lecture about not digging through the trash or *picking things out of dumps with his mouth, you don't know where it's been*. He listened attentively, nodded along, and then proceeded to cheerily forget all of it because dumpster diving was too much fun to give up.

### **213.** (*inspired by Barin\_McLegg*)

"Tommy," Dream said in the key of *what-fresh-insanity-have-you-cooked-up-today*.

"Hi," Tommy replied, grinning brightly. "I've been experimenting."

Dream eyed him up and down, noting the scales, glowing fingers, sharp teeth, and bright-yellow wings he now sported. “I can. . . see that. What. . . exactly. . . were you experimenting with?”

The feathers in Tommy’s wings *rippled*, flowing from sunshine-gold to royal-red. “Just random shit. Potions. Enchantments. Both at the same time. The works.”

“Enchantments?”

Tommy held up his glowing hands. “Yeah! I tried inscribing tiny enchantments on each fingernail— see, the pointer finger on my left hand is Fire Aspect, and the one on my right is Knockback— or maybe it’s the other way around?” He squinted at his fingernails, then shrugged. “Eh. One way to find out.”

He turned to one of the many trees surrounding them and reached out to flick it. Dream’s eyes widened. “Wait Tommy *don—*”

---

“Look, starting a forest fire isn’t anywhere *close* to the other stuff I’ve done.”

“Yes,” Dream said stiffly, applying another coat of glittery polish to Tommy’s soot-stained fingernail. Around them, the charred remains of two acres’ worth of trees smoked and crackled. “But I’d like to limit the amount of damage you do in one loop. Which is why we’re covering up the enchantments.”

Tommy’s wings shuffled sulkily, glossy feathers shining ink-black. “You’re no fun.”

“And you’re a walking mood ring. Care to explain that?”

Vibrant crimson splashed across Tommy’s feathers - a color Dream identified as *pride*. “I thought the color-changing thing the— the chameleons we came across in that one mountain biome could do - it was cool. So I mixed some scales in with a parrot hybrid potion, and—” his wings flared, the scarlet feathers now streaked through with sunrise-gold. “Got scales and fancy multicolored wings. Dunno why the scales don’t change color either, but whatever. Genetics can go fuck itself, because I just *broke* it—”

“And gave yourself enchant-hands on top of that?”

Tommy shrugged. “Can’t be too powerful.”

Dream paused halfway through dipping the brush into the vial of polish. “Tommy. You destroyed a forest with a *fingernail*.”

“Hey, the initial fire was pretty small! The wind just blew it onto the other trees—”

“—that doesn’t mean the damage you did wasn’t *powerful—*”

“—it wasn’t *that* bad— oh c’mon, you don’t have to cover up the middle finger! I have a modified Frost Walker on that!”

“Tommy, I *swear to Prime*—”

**214. *seeing red, pt. 3* ([see previous parts of this loop here](#))**

Dream pulled the makeshift bandage around his shoulder tighter, inhaling as the move sent sharp pain stabbing into his arm. He’d only had half a potion of Healing in his inventory - enough to stop the worst of the bleeding, but not enough to completely close the wound. He needed to stop losing blood— hence resorting to cutting off the hem of his hoodie and using it as a bandage. For once, he was grateful for his fucked-up pain tolerance - he likely wouldn’t have been able to get to safety otherwise.

**“*Dream!*”**

Dream gritted his teeth and forced himself not to react to the voice. The Crimson had been making on and off attempts to speak through Tommy for the past hour, and with each new attempt, it grew steadily more comprehensible. Fortunately, it was unable to enter the Church. Unfortunately, it had settled for pacing angrily around the building. Even *more* unfortunately, it seemed to have learned to take advantage of his emotional connection to Tommy - and was either unable or unwilling to change the inflection of Tommy’s voice from anything other than ‘terrified and in pain’.

**“*Dream! Help me!*”**

Dream exhaled sharply and let his head fall back against the podium. He’d taken to hiding behind it when the Crimson started tracking his movements from outside, appearing in front of a window every time he approached it. The area behind the podium was the only space without a direct line of sight to the windows or the door. He didn’t have to look at Tommy from here.

**“*Please, Dream!*”**

“Fuck,” Dream hissed. He couldn’t break through the walls - the Crimson would see him and run after him. He couldn’t tunnel through the floor - the podium was only small enough to hide him from the Crimson’s sight if he stayed curled up into a little ball. And given the abundance of Crimson flora covering the area around Church Prime - flora that was sure to have roots - tunneling away might be worse than just making a run for it.

Not that running was a fantastic idea either. Unlike Regeneration, Healing didn’t speed up blood replacement - and Dream had lost quite a bit of blood. Was still losing it, in fact. Any sort of physical activity would likely result in him passing out, which was a Bad Idea.

From outside the church, Not-Tommy made a strangled whimpering noise that Dream had never heard the *real* Tommy make. **“*It hurts— Dream, please, make it stop—*”**



Well. At least he knew the Crimson was *terrible* at imitating Tommy, because Tommy would either a) never announce that he was in pain, or b) announce it with enough foul language to make Bad cry. Not that Dream was going to give the Crimson pointers. This situation was already fucked up enough without the Crimson being able to *accurately* pretend to *be* Tommy.

Dream took a deep breath and curled a bit tighter. Alright. He needed a plan. His top priority was fixing Tommy, but to do that, he needed to make it out of this alive and *uninfected*. He already knew he was mentally susceptible to the Crimson - something that could be counteracted by the hazmat suits. However, the Crimson could also *physically* take over someone, like it had done to Tommy.

There had to be a way to protect his body from infection. Not armor or a hazmat suit - armor had chinks, and hazmats could be torn through. And that wasn't even approaching the problem of *how* physical possession worked - was it through skin contact? Inhaled spores?

***“It’ll stop hurting me if you come out!”***

For *fuck’s* s—

Dream sunk his teeth into his cheek and shut his eyes against the tidal wave of *rage* that roared through him. There was nothing he could do at the moment. Rash action would only get himself incapacitated.

Okay. *Okay*. How could he prevent himself from getting infected and free Tommy from the Crimson? Dunking Tommy in Prime Water wouldn't be enough. The Crimson was *in* him - he'd need to drink several doses of Prime Water *and* wait for his body to absorb it to get the infection out of his system, and the likelihood of Dream being able to keep him still long enough to force the water down his throat was next to none. He could also go the fast route and kill Tommy - or ask someone else to do it. But revival just returned a soul to their previous body - what if Tommy respawned with the Crimson in him? What if his *ghost* was still possessed by the Crimson?

Back to the Prime Water idea, then. Getting Tommy to ingest it was the safest bet - but how? He couldn't get close, not without risking being infected himself, if the Crimson could spread through physical contact. He had to *trick* Tommy into ingesting it— but how?

An idea struck him. Several loops ago, Tommy had blessed a jug of punch, successfully turning it into something analogous with Prime Water. Obviously, the Crimson had an interest in keeping Tommy alive - which meant he had to eat and drink. If Dream could become a priest and somehow bless his food. . .

Not to mention the fact that *if* he became a priest, he'd become functionally untouchable to the Egg. In theory, at least. He'd never tested it out.

***“Dream, why are you ignoring me? I— I thought we were friends!”*** Tommy's voice cracked. ***“I thought you cared about me!”***

Dream couldn't stop the strangled hiss of frustration that slipped through his teeth. He hunched forward and clapped his hands over his ears, trying to drown out Not-Tommy's voice. The movement sent fire streaking up his right arm, accompanied by a splash of white blooming across his vision.

He couldn't go on like this. He had to get out soon, before the Crimson managed to goad him into doing something he'd regret. He couldn't dig his way out, couldn't cut his way out, couldn't do this himself—

—couldn't do this *himself*.

Well.

Shit.

He was an *idiot*.

Dream fumbled for his communicator, wincing as the metal slipped under the half-dried blood staining his hand. He took a moment to run through his memories of the timeline. This loop had started post-destruction-of-L'Manberg, which meant he and Technoblade were on fairly good terms. Because he'd been carefully undoing the damage his loop-zero self had done, he wasn't in prison, so Technoblade still owed him a favor. . .

He swiped to Technoblade's tab and began typing one-handed. His trembling fingers left bloody streaks across the keys.

### ***Private Messaging: Technoblade***

<Dream> *techno*

<Dream> *iim calling ihn the favor*

Task completed, he switched the communicator to silent and fixed his eyes on the screen. It wouldn't do for the Crimson to hear the buzz of a received message and realize what he was doing.

Thankfully, he didn't have to wait long.

### ***Private Messaging: Technoblade***

<Technoblade> *what is it?*

<Dream> *have u heard of the eggg*

<Technoblade> *the big red one?*

<Dream> *ys*

<Technoblade> *yes, I have in fact heard of it.*

<Technoblade> *you're typing weird*

<Dream> *the egg got tojimmy*

<Dream> *hes got me trpped in the church*

<Dream> *hurt. cnt go outzidee itll get me too*

<Dream> *get me out pplease*

<Technoblade> *you want to use your favor on me getting you out of the church?*

<Dream> *yes*

<Technoblade> *I can do that.*

<Technoblade> *I'll bring regen too*

<Technoblade> *ETA 10 minutes.*

Tommy's voice sounded from outside, still anguished but now tinged with something distinctly *angry*. ***"Dream! I know you're in there!"***

Now knowing that his way out would be there in a few minutes, Dream felt slightly less terrified at the prospect of facing an infected Tommy. With great effort, he pushed himself to his knees, then shuffle-turned until he was facing the pulpit. He stuck his hand inside the built-in compartment and groped blindly around until he found a groove along the back side. He dug his fingers into it and *yanked*, breathing a huff of relief when it gave.

***"Stop hiding like a coward!"***

Dream poked around in the new space he'd unsealed until his hand closed around a book. He extracted it from the pulpit with some difficulty and sat back on his heels, then grimaced and hastily wiped some blood that had gotten on the cover away with the sleeve of his ruined hoodie. A quick glance-through of the book revealed that it contained what he'd hoped: a guide to priesthood.

Perfect.

He shoved it into his inventory, then cringed when the bright burst of light sent a wave of dizziness through him. The disorientation twisted into ice-cold nausea as Tommy's voice filled the church again. ***"Why won't you help me? Do you hate me that much?"***

Dream let out a shaking breath and curled in on himself, shoving his head between his knees and letting his arms fall out to the sides. He braced himself, but Tommy's next words still felt like a stab through the ribs.

***"Fine then,"*** the Crimson snarled. ***"I hate you too. I hate you for letting this happen to me."***

*Not Tommy*, Dream told himself. *Not Tommy. Tommy told me to leave. Tommy doesn't hate me anymore.*

The next nine minutes felt like the longest in Dream's life. Not-Tommy kept up the verbal abuse, slipping into personal attacks somewhere around the three-minute-mark. Dream furiously tuned him out, humming the main melody of Cat in an attempt to distract himself. He was almost to the end of his second repetition when Not-Tommy made a startled noise.

***". . . You?"***

"Hey, Tommy," Technoblade drawled. The last notes of Cat died in Dream's throat as he sagged against the podium, limbs weak with relief. "You're not looking too great."

Not-Tommy hissed in response. ***"This is none of your business. Leave."***

"I would, but I heard that you've got an ally of mine trapped in there. I can't just let that slide."

A low growl from Not-Tommy. Technoblade hummed, a dangerous note threading through the sound.

"You really want to fight?"

There was a momentary pause as the Egg considered its odds. It was nowhere near as skilled a fighter as Technoblade, nor did Technoblade have any qualms about hurting Tommy - unlike Dream. It clearly realized this, because it hissed angrily. ***"I will remember this."***

"Sure. You leavin' now, or. . .?"

***"You cannot keep him from me forever,"*** the Crimson snarled. A good twenty seconds of silence followed, finally broken by the gentle *thump-thump-thump* of boots against polished blackstone.

"He's gone," Technoblade called. Dream slumped, letting out a gust of breath as he finally, *finally* let his guard down. He didn't raise his head as Technoblade rounded the podium, instead staring down at his boots.

"You're not lookin' too good," Technoblade drawled.

"I'll take that regen if you brought it," Dream croaked through chattering teeth. He was shaking, the icy numbness of blood loss gnawing at his bones. Technoblade uncorked the potion and handed it over, politely ignoring Dream's fumbling and subsequent cursing as he tried to keep the glass from slipping through his trembling fingers. The looper finally

managed to down the potion, then groaned and slumped back against the podium as it took effect.

Technoblade eyed him. “Can you stand? Tommy might be lurkin’—”

“Not Tommy,” Dream gritted out, shuddering at the pins-and-needles sensation of his blood cells multiplying at abnormal rates. Technoblade raised an eyebrow, so he elaborated, “Egg. Controlling Tommy.”

“. . . Sure. The *Egg* might be lurkin’ outside, and I’m not too great at fending off feral children while carryin’ someone.”

“I can walk,” Dream muttered. He braced a hand against the podium, took a breath, and began the arduous process of dragging himself to his feet. Thankfully, Technoblade got the hint and hooked a hand under his freshly-healed arm. Together, they managed to get him on his feet. Dream’s vision briefly went white as blood rushed to his head. He staggered into the podium, blinking furiously as he tried not to topple over.

“Don’t pass out on me,” Technoblade deadpanned, shifting his grip so Dream could use him as a crutch. “Like I said. I can’t fend off feral children while carryin’ someone.”

“I’m *trying*,” Dream hissed. He took a deep breath and blinked the remaining spots from his vision. “Okay. Okay, I think I’m good now.”

Technoblade sent him a dubious look but complied, taking a tentative step forward. Dream matched it, shuffling forward in time as he focused on not throwing up all over Technoblade’s fancy boots. The feeling of a Regeneration after blood loss was the absolute *worst*, and it was bringing back very Not Fun memories.

They made it to the gateway of the church with little incident. Dream tensed as they stepped past the threshold, expecting an ambush. Technoblade raised his sword, also on high alert, but no Crimson-infected enemies manifested to attack them. They left the church grounds uninterrupted. It seemed like the Crimson truly was wary of Technoblade.

Dream made a mental note of that even as he began to regain his own strength, leaning less and less on Technoblade as the Regeneration kicked in. The piglin hybrid let him go without comment, though he did raise an eyebrow when Dream abruptly stopped and looked back.

As he thought, there was no sign of Tommy. He wasn’t sure if the churning in his gut was relief or grief.

“You comin’?” Technoblade called. “I can’t stand here all day, Dream. I’m a busy man.”

“. . . Yeah,” Dream muttered. He took one last look back in the direction of the Egg, then followed.

Dream and Tommy stepped into the room just as Karl staggered to his feet and kicked the trapdoor shut behind him. He looked up at their entrance, glassy stare sliding over them with the barest hint of recognition. “Wh—” he slurred out before his legs crumpled under him.

Tommy lunged forward to catch Karl before he faceplanted. The time traveler groaned and batted weakly at him, not lucid enough to register much beyond the fact that there was an intruder in his hidden room. Tommy hastily lowered him to the ground and backed off, hands raised to show that he meant no harm.

“Wh—?” the haze in Karl’s eyes gradually cleared. He focused on Tommy with unnerving intensity. “You—”

“Hi Karl,” said Dream, and Karl jolted like he’d been struck by lightning. Before he could panic, however, Dream rushed on, “Tommy and I are in a time loop. I’m reformed. We’re friends now. We found out about your time traveling in a previous loop.”

“And about the shitty aftereffects,” Tommy added. “Which is why we’re here.”

“You’re—” Karl tried to sit up, only to exhale sharply and clamp a hand over his stomach.

Tommy shuffled closer. “Karl, are you hurt?”

The other man blinked rapidly at him, jaw tense and face whitening as he fought off what appeared to be another wave of pain. He didn’t reply to Tommy’s question.

“Karl,” Tommy repeated, more urgently. Karl finally jerked his head into something resembling a headshake.

“Why— *how*— ” he gritted out, then gestured helplessly at the two of them, unable to put his roiling emotions into words. The loopers exchanged looks, simultaneously realizing that he probably wouldn’t calm until he received an explanation. Tommy took a deep breath.

“Okay. Quick rundown— Dream and I have been trapped in a time loop for a while, he’s a good guy now, we’re friends, and we recently found out you know stuff about time traveling and might be able to help us get out. The you from the previous loop said he hadn’t learned enough to help us, so he told us to talk to him again in the next loop.”

Karl took a moment to process this. “You’re. . . in a time loop.”

“Yeah. I know you might not believe us, but, uh— the other you did this weird glowy-eyes thing and then he believed us, so—”

Karl’s eyes widened. Clearly, the glowing eyes comment meant something to him, but he didn’t explain. “Okay,” he said. “. . . Okay. So you’re. . . really in a time loop. And you. . . came to me for help?”

“Yeah. We’re hoping you can figure out how to break the loop, or something.”

“I’ve just started traveling,” Karl admitted. “I don’t think I can help you.”

Dream and Tommy exchanged looks again. “We know,” Dream said. “This loop started. . . earlier than the last one.”

“Then. . . why are you here?”

“Your version of time traveling looks like it’s kinda shitty,” Tommy said bluntly. “We didn’t want you to deal with that by yourself.”

The grimace on Karl’s face spoke volumes.

“And also to ask—is there any way we can get other versions of you to believe us quickly about the time loops?” When Karl hesitated, Dream rushed to add, “if not, that’s fine.”

“No, there is. It’s just. . .” Karl seemed to struggle with an internal battle for a moment, then set his jaw and looked up at Tommy. “Tell me. . . tell *him* that he misses being purple.”

Dream and Tommy stared at him. “Like, literally purple?” Dream asked blankly. “Did. . . did your skin use to be purple?”

Karl’s smile was wry. “Something like that.”

Both loopers stared at him.

“That should make him believe you,” Karl continued, apparently seeing no reason to elaborate. “It’s. . . something that nobody else knows. Or *should* know, anyway.”

“*Purple?*” Tommy asked.

“Purple,” Karl answered helpfully. “If you’re really in a time loop, you’ll find out. Eventually.”

Tommy and Dream exchanged looks and silently agreed not to pursue this line of questioning.

---

By the fifth loop in which they went in search of Karl, both Dream and Tommy had the routine down pat. If they were earlier in the timeline, Dream would approach first and present the whole “Tommy and I are in a time loop, we’re friends now, you’re a time traveler, and past you told us you could help us and that you missed being purple.” If it was later in the timeline, Tommy would take point. Every Karl would remain initially wary of them even when they mentioned the “purple” thing, but as time passed and neither of them revealed his secrets to anyone else, he’d grow more open.

It soon became clear that the mysterious pain following his trips was not the only downside to Karl’s brand of time traveling. While he never described the specifics of his journeys, the things he said implied that they weren’t very pleasant. Furthermore, it had soon become clear

that his traveling was involuntary, given his sudden disappearances and the disorientation he experienced every time he returned.

So they stuck to every Karl, visiting often to make sure he was alive and healthy. Whenever he'd disappeared for a particularly long time, they'd wait at the portal to catch him when he returned. They maintained peace on the server as best as they could and sent him selfies with his friends to reassure him that they were all still alive.

And slowly, each Karl grew to trust them. Slowly, he opened up about his past. And finally, when one loop dragged on long enough—

***Group Chat: time is a social construct (but gravity is NOT. tommy pls stop breaking the laws of physics)***

*<KarlJacobs> can we talk?*

*<TommyInnit> karl thats ominous as FUCK*

*<KarlJacobs> ive been thinking about*

*<KarlJacobs> OH nonono nothingbad*

*<KarlJacobs> i want to tell you about my traveling*

*<TommyInnit> ohh*

*<Dream> are you sure?*

*<KarlJacobs> yes*

*<KarlJacobs> my library, 1 pm tomorrow*

---

“So to start— I’m not. . . a Player, exactly.” Karl hesitated for a moment, then met their eyes. “Have either of you heard of— of the tempii? T-E-M-P-I-I?”

Dream frowned, chewing on the inside of his cheek as he tried to recall the term. It felt. . . familiar, somehow. He could’ve sworn he’d— *oh*.

“The books,” he blurted. At the confused looks he received from Tommy and Karl, he elaborated, “the ones in the stronghold. Back when we were trying to find stuff about time travel and whatnot - there was a whole lot of myths about tempii? Tempus? Remember? The drawings were really colorful—”



“Oh yeah! Those things!” Tommy lit up, snapping his fingers in recognition. Then his face screwed up. “. . . The myths were kinda fucked up, though.”

Karl’s face grew pensive. “. . . I didn’t know there were books about us.”

Both loopers stared at him. “What?” said Dream.

“I’m a tempus.” Karl shifted awkwardly. “I . . . don’t usually look like this. Or, uh, I didn’t always look like this. I look like this now.”

“Oh,” Tommy said blankly. “Is that why you said you miss being purple?”

“Yeah.”

“Then why don’t you just go back to. . . being purple?” Dream asked. “You know players can have really strange appearances—”

“That’s not why I’m—” Karl cut himself off and shook his head. “It’ll be easier if I start from the beginning.”

Dream raised an eyebrow. “Did we unlock your tragic backstory?”

Karl coughed out a surprised laugh. “Y-yeah! Something like that.” He took a deep breath, steadying himself as his audience leaned forward. “Okay. So. Tempii. We live in the space outside of timelines. It’s kinda like a void, if you will, and the timelines are basically just really shiny “paths”, as we call them - made of “strings”. They’re not literally strings, that’s just the best way I can really explain how we perceive them.”

Tommy opened his mouth to ask a question, but Karl barrelled onwards. “Tempii observe events in the timeline, but they’re not supposed to interfere. The cases that we *have* recorded of a tempus intentionally interfering with a timeline— things, um, things *really* don’t go well. So when we *do* enter a timeline, we try to stay out of sight - we *can* take the form of the usual inhabitants of a timeline - players, for example - but, uh, it’s a lot easier to kill us when we’re. . . mortal.”

“Wait,” Tommy cut in. “You’re. . . not mortal?”

“I *wasn’t*,” Karl corrected. “I am now. I’m— *stuck*, I guess. In this timeline. So. I’m pretty much just a player now, with some added benefits. Magic. Being less easy to rip apart. Things like that.”

Dream’s eyes sharpened. “Stuck?”

Karl grimaced. “There’s this thing called the— the Inbetween. From what I’ve been able to figure out, it’s some kind of parasite. Basically, it latches onto paths—timelines, sorry—and grabs any tempus that drifts too close. And then it, uh, traps us here. And drains our memories, which, uh, are what tempii are made out of. So.”

Both men stared at him, aghast.

Karl fidgeted with the sleeves of his hoodie. “It. . . it got me when I drifted too close. This timeline is— a really nice shade of gold, and— I just— wanted to look closer, I guess, but then—” he clapped his hands together and splayed them apart. “So. Yeah. I tried to leave when I first got here, but, uh, the Inbetween forces me to move on the path instead of across it. So instead of universe hopping, I. . . guess I do time traveling now. I can't really control it yet, and I think the Inbetween uses it to steal memories from me, but. . . from what I've heard, future-me seems to be pretty functional, so. Maybe I'll figure out a way to stop before I. . . you know.”

He fell quiet. A solid minute passed in dumbfounded silence. Finally, Tommy looked up at the ceiling, inhaled, and said, “What the *fuck*.”

Karl's smile looked more like a grimace. “Yeah.”

Tommy held up a hand. “So let me get this straight. You're. . . some kind of void-dwelling eldritch—”

“I see myself more as an “alien”, but I am a tempus, yes.”

“—and you see the timeline as strings or some shit. And you— got close to *our* timeline because you thought it was *pretty*—”

“It was,” Karl muttered.

“—which means you're now slowly dying because some kinda interdimensional parasite is forcing you to time travel and eating your soul while doing it—”

“Not how I would've phrased it, but. . . yes?”

Tommy took a deep, deep breath, then flatly said, “You are an *alien*. We have been talking to an *entire fucking alien*, Dream.”

Karl blinked at him, confused. “. . . *That's* what you choose to focus on?”

“That's why you appeared on the server without an invitation,” Dream said abruptly, drawing the attention of the other two. He stared through Karl, brow furrowed in thought. “You were. . . so confused, at first. Oh Prime. Is *that* why you were so confused by frogs?”

“I hadn't been to a universe with frogs before,” Karl admitted sheepishly.

“Oh *Prime*,” Dream repeated. He lowered his head into his hands. “*Prime*.”

“I know it's a lot, I just—” Karl cut himself off. “Sorry, I shouldn't have dumped everything on you at once—”

“No, no, it's— fine. Just. Give us a second.”

Karl obliged, choosing to stare awkwardly down at his hoodie while he waited for the loopers to gather their thoughts. At last, Tommy shook his head and looked up at Karl.

“That’s a shit deal, man,” he said bluntly.

“I know.” Karl snorted. “Believe me, I *know*.”

“Is there anything we can do to . . . help?” Dream asked. “If there’s anything—”

“I don’t think so.” Karl hesitated. “Though maybe— if— if you come across a me that knows *some way*—”

“We’ll ask him,” Tommy promised. He hesitated, then added, “And if. . . *when* we get out of this time loop, we’ll free you too.”

He glanced at Dream, who was already nodding his head.

Karl stared at them, eyes wide. Then he *beamed*. Suddenly, Dream realized how beaten-down and world-weary he’d seemed before. Cheerful as he was, he’d carried a constant sense of bone-deep *exhaustion* within him that only the promise of freedom could lift.

“*Thank you*.” The gratitude in his voice was so genuine that both loopers were taken aback. Karl cleared his throat and shook his head. “Sorry, I just— if there’s *any* chance I could get out of this— I didn’t think there *was* a chance—”

“Fucking *end*, Karl.” Tommy pushed himself up and knee walked across the distance between them, arms outstretched. “Just— *fuck*. You need a hug. And therapy. *Shit*.”

Karl let out a strangled laugh as he returned the hug. “You— *ha*— you do too!”

“Hey, I do therapy! I do therapy regularly—”

“We don’t,” Dream deadpanned.

“Shut up shut up shut up— *lies and slander*; Karl I am a very healthy and mentally stable individual— *oi*, stop laughing at me! *Karl!*”

---

Dream and Tommy stared into the room.

Everything was covered in a fine layer of dust. Splotches of mold crawled from the corners, filling the room with the choking stench of mildew. The wall was stained with ash and long-dried blood, and the oppressive silence in the absence of the clock’s usual ticking chilled them to the bone.

“I think,” said Dream, “we might be too late this time.”

“We’re on time,” Tommy protested, pointing at the calendar. “There’s still *weeks*—”

*“Look around, Tommy.”*

Tommy scowled at the room before marching over to the carpet and kicking it back. He yanked up the trapdoor it covered and climbed down the ladder, sliding off the last few rungs and dropping to the ground in a crouch.

The cave was pitch-dark. The dim glow from the portal that usually illuminated it was nowhere to be seen. Tommy flailed blindly in the dark, then shrieked when Dream landed next to him, lantern in hand. “FUCK!”

“Watch your step,” Dream warned. He lowered the lantern, spilling light across the walls of the rough cavern. Their footsteps echoed off of the uneven stone as they ventured in, haunting in the silence. They came to a stop at the end. Dream raised the lantern.

The portal frame loomed above them, cast in harsh relief by the jagged shadows. The portal itself was just. . . gone. There was nothing but a wall of smooth stone.

“Well, shit,” Tommy said eloquently. “He’s. . . definitely gone this loop.”

They returned to the library in somber silence. Once Tommy had kicked the rug back over the trapdoor, Dream set the lantern on the table and turned to the bloodstained wall. “Karl moves on a different timetable,” he murmured. “Whatever causes— *that*— ” he pointed at the stains on the wall, “—appears on different days. It changes every loop.”

“So we’re just playing dice with time,” Tommy realized. “The chances of us finding Karl *when* he’s dying—”

“—are very low,” Dream finished grimly. “But is there anything else we can do?”

Tommy’s silence was answer enough.

---

They kept missing Karl.

Sometimes they undershot, and while later iterations of Karl had more control over their powers, they were never powerful enough to explain, much less break, the loops.

Sometimes they overshot, and Karl would no longer be there at all.

It was frustrating. It was *painful*. For the first time in a *long* time, they were faced with a problem they couldn’t easily solve.

But they had no other choice. If the time loop continued indefinitely, they would lose themselves. Karl was their only lead. So they kept trying, and trying, and *trying*—

---

“He should be back today,” Tommy said.

Dream hummed, running through the list of dates he’d long since memorized. He winced when he realized that this trip would be the Masquerade.

Both he and Tommy had long since learned that Karl’s involuntary jumps into the past occurred on the same dates every loop. Karl had been very relieved to learn so, and had wasted no time getting them to copy down every trip on a calendar. This had apparently prevented many scheduling mishaps in Karl’s personal life - or so they’d been told. Dream supposed that disappearing unannounced at inopportune moments probably did cause problems.

Still, it didn’t change the fact that Karl was being involuntary plucked out of his place in the timeline and thrown into Prime-knows-when. Dream and Tommy could only help in the aftermath - something that bothered them to no end, particularly after the more mentally taxing journeys. The Masquerade was one of the worse trips Karl undertook - partially because of how gruesome it was, and partially because the Karl at this point in the timeline had not yet grown used to the hardships that came with time travel.

They made their way to Karl’s library, then to the bookshelf hiding the secret door. Dream pushed it open, expecting to see Karl once again collapsed on the floor.

Instead, Karl was standing stock-still in the middle of the room, staring at. . . another Karl. A Karl who looked and dressed awfully similar to the Karl Dream remembered from Loop Zero, currently covered in ash and dirt and bleeding profusely.

Both Karls’ gazes snapped to Dream, then Tommy behind him. “Um,” began normal Karl, only to be interrupted by Tommy’s vehement “*What the fuck?*”

“Well,” said the bloodied, ash-covered Karl. “*Honk.*”

## Chapter End Notes

Next chapter contains important lore (and of course, crack). Be afraid  
Side note: if any of you have ideas for a hurt/comfort generation loss fic. Please give them to me. I’m currently hyperfixated on it and I need to get the brainrot out before it consumes me

FANWORK! (as usual if I missed yours pls comment and let me know)  
DRIPPITYDRIPPI MADE A VIDEO ADAPTATION OF [THE WHOLE THEM DISCOVERING THE OTHER PERSON IS ALSO IN A LOOP SCENE](#) IN GACHA  
THIS IS SO COOL

Holy guacamole Hleb made so much amazing art for remix - [remix tommy being scary](#),

[remix tommy being a menace to society](#), [remix tommy being goofy](#)! And then Dream, both [masked](#) and [unmasked](#) - I love their artstyle hkljdklfs  
Fawn also drew such ANGSTY art of tommy and I am living for it!! [Version 1](#), [Version 2](#) :D

This [silly goofy height chart](#) and [doodles of ot!Karl](#) by Astral! She has so much stuff about the personification of the Inbetween and Other Side (i.e. [these cool gacha designs](#)) and is also currently working on another animatic for ot (and just has wonderful art in general), so join the discord server if you want to check out the screenshots she's revealed so far :D you should also subscribe to her [here](#) and watch all her videos!

Nekuu sang a [wonderful cover](#) of Ren's song for on temporizing! You have to be in the discord server to see it though ajsdklfj

[A poem](#) by the wonderful ColorNS! :D

A new inspired work about "[what if remix was real?](#)" Really fascinating concept :D Go check it out!!

### **Loop Notes**

**212.** After Dream escaped prison, he promptly decided to become a panther instead. There was a scrapped bit in this one where Tommy tried to convince Dream to get out of a tree.

**215.** }@δ :43? 3 >3&3G 3 &@6@δ[ @ 3=9@ A7@G] %@>>ϣ[ %S44@[ Sδ&767δ AS767? 3GG79=3G=@]

Hint 1: AAGδ&SGhiϣ

Hint 2: No. -1

Join the [discord server](#) if you want to help crack it with faster communication!

# Chapter 44

## Chapter Notes

Hi. It's been a while hasn't it. This fic is now 2 years old. Wild.

Shameless plug: I did in fact write a [genloss fic](#). If that interests you, give it a glance <3

Shoutout to Notar, Kay, and Astral for cracking the code last chapter!! The translation is

"They were going to kill us all, or worse. Tommy, Tubbo, you can fix it."

### Spotlighted Comments

**KoriEmp:** Loop 212:

Jack: get yo panther out of my trasH

Tommy: he don't bite

Jack: YES HE DO

**InsanityGanon:** Loop 211:

Dream: giving 2% effort into a bit

Server: we 110% need to fight god now.

**Clearly\_Crystal\_Clear:** [referencing Dream, Tommy, and Karl] Omg it's 'in severe need of therapy' trio!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

## 216.

"WILBUR!"

Wilbur turned just in time to catch an armful of happy toddler. He staggered back with an "oof!", nearly tripping over his own shoelaces. "Wh—Tommy what the—?"

Tommy pulled back enough to beam up at him. "Hug!"

"...Hug?"

"Hug," Tommy agreed. His gap-toothed grin turned devious. "I'm on a mission."

"A mission, huh," Wilbur echoed. He knelt so that Tommy's feet were no longer dangling off the ground and returned the hug. "What mission is it?"

"I'm gonna hug everyone!"

Wilbur stilled, brow furrowing. "Tommy, sunshine...are you sure that's a good idea? Not everyone on the server is nice, you know."

"I'll be okay! Hugs prevent violence!"

“...Who told you that?”

Tommy puffed up. “Nobody! I learned through exp—expar—esprim—”

“Experimentation?”

“Yeah, that!” Tommy leaned closer, a conspiratorial grin on his face. “If you hug ‘em fast enough, they’ll be too surprised to stab you.”

“That’s—”

“—super smart, right?” Tommy wiggled out of Wilbur’s arms. “I’m so smart. The smartest man alive. I’m gonna give so many people so many hugs.”

“Wait, Tommy—don’t—”

Tommy was already gone. Wilbur stared down at the spot where he’d been.

“Well,” he said, “fuck.”

---

“What.”

“Hug!” The blonde toddler currently menacing Schlatt’s shins demanded. He held up his arms. “Gimme hug!”

Schlatt looked left, then looked right, in case the child was asking someone else. He was not. Just to make sure, though, he pointed to himself. “You want a hug. From me?”

“Yes!” Tiny-Tommy stomped his foot. “Give!”

“...I don’t think you want me to give you a hug, kid.”

Tiny-Tommy scowled. “I do! I do! Give it!”

Fucking *End*. Grown-up Tommy had been a pain and a half because of his stubbornness, but Tiny-Tommy was *worse*. Schlatt couldn’t *wait* for the others to figure out however the fuck Tommy had been turned into a toddler. For now, though, he had to make sure Tommy wouldn’t murder him when he eventually regained his memories. “You know how you’re younger than you usually are right now?”

Tiny-Tommy’s eyes narrowed. “Uh-huh?”

“Yeah, well, older-you would murder me if I tried to hug you. And that’s if Wilbur doesn’t get to me first.”



“Fuck older me,” Tiny-Tommy said.

Through sheer heroic force of will, Schlatt managed to resist going into cardiac arrest on the spot. “Where the fu—*fudgenuggets* did you hear that word?” he hissed. It was a well-known fact that cursing had been strictly forbidden around Tommy—a rule enforced by the unholy trinity of Philza, Puffy, and Sam. Those caught speaking foul words around the child would be prompted to place a chunk of precious material in the “swear chest” at the center of the Community House, or be faced with a “friendly visit” in the middle of the night.

Unfortunately, it seemed that Tommy already knew the forbidden words. And doubly unfortunately, Schlatt would be a *prime suspect* for *where* he had learned those forbidden words.

“Around,” Tiny-Tommy chirped. Which *really* would not help Schlatt’s case. Before he could convince the tiny menace to clarify, however, he found himself with bigger problems; the aforementioned tiny menace had jumped at him and latched onto his torso like an overenthusiastic koala. Schlatt automatically brought his arms up to support him, and by the time he realized that the gesture could be considered a hug, Tommy had already wiggled out of his grasp and dropped back to the floor.

“Thanks for the hug, Mister Schlatt!” he chirped, before glancing at the sky and yelping. “Oh shit, I’m late! Bye Mister Schlatt, gotta go!”

And then he was gone. Wonderful.

Schlatt resigned himself to becoming considerably poorer within the coming week.

---

“I have had this child for five minutes, but if anything happens to him, I will kill everyone in this room and then myself.”

Punz raised an eyebrow at Karl. Karl raised an eyebrow right back and tightened his grip on Tommy, who was currently hanging off of him like a limpet. “...You do realize that’s a teenager, right?”

“Not right now he’s not.”

Punz’s response was interrupted when the toddler released his death grip on Karl’s shoulders to point imperiously at Punz and demand, “Hug.”

“No,” Punz said instantly.

Instead of bursting into tears like a normal toddler would, Tommy narrowed his eyes. “...I’ll pay you.”

“With what money?” Punz challenged, because the kid was definitely not old or strong enough to go mining by himself. He was not expecting the (current) three-year-old to wiggle out of Karl’s arms, whip out an ender chest, and dig out an entire block of netherite.

“Gimme a hug and it’s yours,” Tommy said.

Punz blinked slowly. “...Where did you even get that?”

“The swear chest! I get ten per—porcent of the stuff in there!”

“Ten *percent* of the stuff,” Karl corrected. He glanced at Punz. “The other ninety percent goes to renovating whatever needs to be renovated.”

Punz looked down at the small child. Tommy wiggled the netherite block and looked up at him with faux-innocence, and—dammit, the promise of netherite was too much.

“...How long do you want the hug to be?”

Tommy’s brows scrunched together. “Uhhh...one minute?”

Punz considered the trade. One minute of his time for a block of rare metal. It was technically a contract, so his reputation as a ruthless mercenary wouldn’t be on the line.

“Fu-frick it. Fine.” Punz held out a hand. “Netherite block for a hug.”

Tommy positively *beamed* as he shoved the block into Punz’s hands. He waited long enough for the adult to stow it away, then proceeded to launch himself at Punz. Punz caught him easily—and went stiff as a board.

“Relax,” Tommy grumbled. “You’re holding me like you’re planning to break my back or something.”

Punz was indeed holding Tommy in a position usually reserved for yeeting an opponent over his shoulder, but it would’ve only been effective if Tommy was a full-grown adult. He carefully shifted his grip so that it was supporting more of Tommy’s weight, then did his best to relax a bit.

Hm. This wasn’t as awkward as he’d thought it would be. In fact, it was almost nostalgic. He’d done this before, too—back when he was very, very young. Back when he still had siblings.

With a start, Punz realized he’d forgotten to count the seconds. He stared blankly ahead for several moments, then sighed and began counting from zero. It wasn’t like the extra seconds would cost him anything, and it was his own fault for forgetting to count, anyway.

He was on thirty-seven when Tommy began to pull away. “You can put me down,” he told Punz. “It’s been a minute.”

Huh. Honest kid. Punz could respect that.

Maybe it was that respect. Maybe it was the niggling feeling that he'd been overpaid for a one-minute hug. Maybe it was the nostalgia. For whatever reason, though, Punz found himself saying, "I'm only on forty seconds."

Tommy blinked up at him, then broke into the widest smile Punz had ever seen. Feeling strangely embarrassed, the mercenary glanced away and up at Karl—only to double take when he found the man snapping rapid-fire pictures on his communicator. He sent Karl a death glare, but Karl just beamed and gave him a thumbs-up.

"Okay," Punz said hastily. "That's sixty seconds. I'm putting you down now."

Tommy obediently let him set him on his feet, then grinned up at him. "Thanks, Punz!" he chirped, then spun to face Karl. "I'm gonna go find Sam now—talk to you later!"

With one last wave, he dashed away. Punz watched him go, feeling strangely off-balance but *lighter*. He was shortly snapped out of his reverie by the click of the communicator taking another picture. His head swiveled towards Karl.

"You will delete those," he said.

Karl narrowed his eyes. "No."

Punz drew his sword. Karl yelped, turned tail, and *sprinted*.

Because he was feeling nice, Punz gave him a five-second head start. And then he followed.

---

"Hug!"

Sam complied easily. He scooped Tommy up, a smile stretching across his lips. "Hi Tommy. What're you up to?"

"Hugging everyone," The toddler chirped. He patted Sam on the shoulder—likely because his arms were too short to reach Sam's back. "And now I hugged you!"

"And now you've hugged me," Sam agreed. His eyes flicked up when movement flashed in his peripheral vision, landing on Quackity. "You want to hug Quackity too?"

Tommy detached himself so quickly that Sam fumbled to catch him. "YES!" he cheered, reaching grabby hands towards Quackity. Quackity stumbled back, wide-eyed, clearly not expecting a small child to be suddenly shoved in his face.

"What the f—" Quackity winced when he got a *look* from Sam. "—fudge! I was going to say fudge! Prime, Sam, *chill!*"

Tommy looked back and forth between the two of them, clearly confused. Sam patted him on the head. “Nothing you need to worry about, Tommy.” He turned his attention back to Quackity. “Tommy’s hugging everyone on the server. It’s your turn.”

Quackity, to his credit, processed this information fairly quickly. “Uh—I mean—okay? What —”

His next question was cut off when Tommy latched onto him. The duck hybrid’s arms automatically came up to wrap around him. He sent Sam a bewildered look, but Sam just gave him a discreet thumbs-up and sidled back to let him handle the small child himself.

“Hi, Tommy,” Quackity said, bemusement slowly giving way to fondness. “So you’re giving people hugs, huh?”

“Mhm.” Tommy shifted, pulling himself a little higher so he could peer over Quackity’s shoulders. “Did you know your wings are really cool?”

Quackity’s wings flared with pride, scattering sparks of sunlight across the feathers. “Da— dang right they are. You wanna touch them?”

*“Can I?”*

---

“TUBBO!”

With an ease born of repetition, Tubbo knelt down and caught Tommy before the toddler could barrel full-force into his knees. He swept the kid up and spun him around, much to Tommy’s delight. “Hey, bossman! Good to see you!”

Tommy beamed, then leaned in conspiratorially. “Hey, hey, Tubbo, guess what?”

“What?”

“I hugged Schlatt.”

Tubbo’s smile froze on his face. “Oh?”

Tommy nodded. “And Karl, and Punz, and Quackity, and Sam! I had to pay Punz, though, ‘cause he wouldn’t hug me otherwise.”

“I see,” Tubbo hummed. Nothing of note seemed to have happened with Schlatt, so he let it go for now. “You already hugged me yesterday. Why’d you hug me again?”

Tommy’s expression grew solemn with all the gravitas a three-year-old could muster. “Hugs make people happy. Wan’ you to be happy.”

Tubbo's heart didn't melt; it spontaneously combusted. "Aw, bossman," he said, voice pitched upward due to the huge grin stretched across his face.

Tommy peered at him suspiciously. "...Are you doing the 'aww' thing? I don't like the 'aww' thing. The grownups do that to *babies*. "

"No, no, I'm just happy," Tubbo assured him. "Your hug worked. Thank you."

Tommy's answering grin could've outshone the sun.

---

*Smol child! Yeet him out the window! NO DO NOT. He'll be fine! You're doing it wrong lol—nO WHY ARE YOU HOLDING HIM LIKE THAT? Dear Prime you CAN'T DANGLE SMALL CHILDREN BY THEIR SHIRTS—NOT THEIR LEGS EITHER FOR FUCK'S SAKE—*

"I'm doing this wrong, aren't I?" Technoblade asked the toddler he was currently dangling upside-down. Tommy scowled at him from where he was hanging by his left ankle.

"This is not how you hug," he informed Technoblade. Technoblade frowned.

"You attacked me," he said.

"I was *trying* to give you a hug!"

*The bar was on the floor and you went under it. Congratulations. Can someone tell me why we decided to follow this idiot around for the rest of our afterlives? He's kinda funny? He's going to drop Tommy and give him permanent head damage. Hey at least he's not stabbing!*

Tommy scowled. "Can you put me down?"

Technoblade moved to drop him, only to freeze when half of Chat screamed a collective **FUCKING DO NOT**. The other half was either cackling raucously or chanting *do it do it do it*. When Chat split on things like this, it was usually a good idea to adhere to common sense—i.e. considering that dropping a child headfirst might hurt said child.

As gently as he could, Technoblade tucked his free arm under Tommy's back and turned him right-side-up. Then he set the toddler on his feet. What he failed to anticipate, however, was for Tommy to then latch onto his knees and make a virtuous effort to strangle them.

"...Heh? What—" Technoblade attempted to pry him off, but the toddler clung on with dogged determination. "What are you doing?"

"Hug!" Tommy demanded.

*I'm literally going to cry. I will burst into tears right here. Where's Dadza when you need him? Someone needs to teach Techno how to hug. Honestly, he needed a hug. Don't we all?*

*Awww, I'll hug you! Free hugs! Hugs! We don't have bodies anymore. We're literally disembodied voices. I am aggressively thinking of hugging you, and a lack of a physical vessel cannot stop me. Hug!*

At that moment, the door swung open. Philza stepped into the house, shaking snow off his boots, only to pause and stare at the scene in front of him.

“...Techno?”

“Hi, Phil.”

“Hi. There is a small child attached to your shins.”

“I know,” Technoblade said. “He’s attackin’ me.”

“I’m *hugging* you,” Tommy corrected with a scowl.

“Well, I *feel* pretty attacked right now.”

Philza exhaled. Technoblade clocked it as the fondly exasperated sigh Philza let out whenever Technoblade revealed the extent of his social awkwardness. The avian shut the door behind him and kicked his boots off, then knelt so he was level with Tommy. “Hey, Toms,” he said gently. “You wanna let go of Techno?”

“No.”

“Why not?”

“He needs a hug,” Tommy said.

Philza glanced up at Technoblade. Technoblade did his best to broadcast his panic. Brief amusement flashed through Philza’s eyes before he looked back down at Tommy. “Well, it looks like you’ve hugged him. You want to let go now?”

“No.”

“No?”

“He hasn’t hugged me back.”

Philza nodded, like this interaction made any sort of sense. “Will you let Techno go if he hugs you back?”

“...Maybe.”

Philza raised an eyebrow at Technoblade. Technoblade glanced at the small child, then back at Philza.

Look, Technoblade *did* know how to hug. He’d done it before, in a few rare instances. Most of those instances had been to restrain an enemy, though, and he’d never hugged someone so

comparatively *small* before. Tommy was fragile right now, and Technoblade didn't want to accidentally crush him, or something.

Philza seemed to realize this, because his smile turned distinctly *soft*. Technoblade felt his expression firming into the "Techno's in Denial About Having Feelings #2" face, as Wilbur called it.

"Here, I'll talk you through it," Philza said. "Tommy, do you mind letting go? Just for a second, I promise. Technoblade needs to get down, and he can't do that if you're holding onto his legs like that."

Tommy reluctantly peeled himself off and settled into a stance eerily similar to a predator waiting to pounce. Technoblade sent him a wary look, then turned his full attention to Philza.

"Kneel down so you're around his level," Philza instructed. Technoblade did as told, but even crouching, he was a good head taller than Tommy. "Hunch over—yep, like that. Now hold out your arms."

As soon as Technoblade held his arms out, Tommy latched back on. Technoblade was left crouching awkwardly, his arms held stiffly out in front of him.

Philza rolled his eyes with fond exasperation. "Hug him back, Techno. I know you know how to do that."

Tentatively, Technoblade wrapped his arms around Tommy. It was...nice. Kinda felt like wrapping himself up in a nice blanket and curling up in piglin form near the fireplace after a long day out in the arctic.

*Do not aww. Do not aww. The urge is too strong! Resist the temptation!  
Awwwwwwwwww. No shut up shut up you're ruining the moment! Let him have a hug,  
he deserves it!*

Technoblade sighed and carefully extricated himself from the hug. Tommy let him go with some reluctance, then proceeded to lunge at Philza. Philza had clearly been expecting it, because he caught him with an ease Technoblade envied.

"What brought this on, Toms?" Philza asked as he patted the toddler's back.

Tommy huffed. "I'm gonna hug everyone on the server."

"I see, I see." Philza smiled at Technoblade over Tommy's shoulder, a smile that Technoblade unwittingly found himself returning. "How's that been going!"

"Fucking *awesome!*"

Philza's smile froze. Smoothly, almost robotically, he pulled back to look Tommy in the eyes. "...Where did you hear that word, Toms?"

"Fuck?" Tommy asked. At Philza's nod, he shrugged. "I dunno. Just around, I guess."

Philza hummed. “Who have you talked to recently?”

“Uh—Wilbur? And Tubbo, and Sam, and, and, uhhhhh—oh! And Schlatt!”

Philza’s smile took on a distinctly *dangerous* edge, but Tommy remained oblivious. Technoblade almost envied his childish naivete. “Thank you, Toms.”

The toddler nodded, his pudgy face set with near-comical solemnity. “Anything for you, Philza Minecraft.”

---

“Tubbo’s definitely the best. He does all the fun stuff everyone else is too scared to do—throwing me in the air and spinning me around and shit. Like a two foot drop could hurt me. Pussies.” Tommy huffed as he scrawled Tubbo’s name in the “S” tier of the ‘Hugging Skill’ chart. “Technoblade’s the worst, though—he’s got no idea where to put his arms.”

“And yet you hugged him the most.”

“...It’s funny watching him panic,” Tommy admitted. Dream shook his head in mock-exasperation.

“You are an evil, evil child.”

“Oi, I’m not a child!”

“The fact that you didn’t deny the ‘evil’ part says something.”

Tommy smiled sweetly and sent him a gesture that would’ve had Sam gasping like an offended matron. Then he turned to his hug-rating chart and studied it thoughtfully.

“...You know, there’s still one person I haven’t rated yet.”

Dream sighed and held out his arms. “Come here, you demonic not-child.”

Tommy promptly tackled him.

## 217.

“PULL THE LEVER, BIG Q!”

Technoblade grimaced, knuckles going white around the Totem of Undying. Even if he didn’t lose a life, this was going to *hurt*. Phil’s protests faded into background noise as he shut his eyes and *breathed*. He heard the distant squeal of a lever being shoved down, then the *shhk* of a rope being cut. The backs of his eyelids grew dimmer as the shadow cast over him spill



outwards, the noonday sun blotted out by the object responsible for his approaching execution. The anvil crashed into his skull—

—and bounced right off.

Dumbfounded silence. Pure, dumbfounded silence. Even Punz, who'd been attempting to fend off the three Butcher Army members simultaneously, had paused mid-swing to stare at him.

Technoblade cracked one eye open to see the anvil lying haphazardly against the cage walls. Tentatively, he reached out and poked at it. It squished under his finger.

...Why was the anvil made of foam?

Eh. He wasn't about to look a gift horse in the mouth. With a huff, he stepped onto the foam anvil. It squished beneath his feet but gave him enough height to hook his fingers around the top of the cage. A bit of awkward flailing and liberal use of upper body strength later, he was free.

His would-be executioners were beginning to recover by the time he'd gotten free—which would've been a problem if Punz hadn't chosen that moment to slam a Potion of Weakness at Tubbo's feet. The president collapsed.

In the ensuing chaos, nobody noticed as Technoblade slipped off the stage and disappeared into the alleyways of L'Manberg.

---

“PULL THE LEVER, BIG Q!”

Technoblade grimaced, knuckles going white around the Totem of Undying. Even if he didn't lose a life, this was going to *hurt*. Phil's protests faded into background noise as he shut his eyes and *breathed*. He heard Quackity's rapid footsteps, then—the sound of wingbeats?

Technoblade looked up just in time to see a giant winged lizard drop out of the sky, tear the anvil off its rope, and carry it away.

The ensuing dumbfounded silence let Technoblade know that no, this had not been planned. He glanced at Philza in the hopes for some guidance, only to find his immortal friend looking similarly baffled. *Then* he glanced up at the sky in time to see the black dragon circling around and diving back down—straight for his cage.

Technoblade cringed back and squeezed his eyes shut, bracing himself for death by dragon. At least being killed by a giant flying lizard would sound cooler than being crushed by an anvil—but it would still *hurt*.

There was a bone-shaking *thump*, followed by a *hisssss* of hot air slipping through very sharp teeth. When several seconds ticked by and Technoblade remained uneaten, he warily pried open an eye.

The dragon blinked languidly at him, its luminous purple eyes a mere foot from the bars of his cage. Technoblade swallowed as it stalked around the platform, studying his makeshift prison like a cat would study a fishbowl. Then he went very, very still as the dragon leaned down and—picked him up by the back of his shirt?

Huh. So maybe he wasn't going to get eaten.

The dragon then proceeded to lower him very, very gently onto the platform— *outside* of the cage—and crouched.

“Uh,” said Technoblade.

*Climb on the dragon, idiot*, one voice hissed. The others soon joined in. *Oooo yessssss ride the dragon! Fly! Fly! Fly! INCINERATE YOUR ENEMIES. Do ender dragons even breathe fire?*

The dragon huffed impatiently and swung its head around in a strangely human gesture to motion at its back. Warily, Technoblade climbed on, doing his best not to accidentally kick the giant possibly-carnivorous lizard. Once he was fairly secure, the dragon rose to its full height, spread its wings, and *leapt*.

Technoblade did not scream. He *did not*, no matter what Chat said. It was a shout of victory.

*Sureeeeeee*, said Chat. Technoblade decided that Chat should shut up.

---

“PULL THE LEVER, BIG Q!”

Technoblade grimaced, knuckles going white around the Totem of Undying. Even if he didn't lose a life, this was going to *hurt*. Phil's protests faded into background noise as he shut his eyes and *breathed*. He heard Quackity's rapid footsteps—then heard them halt, followed by the heavy *thud* of a body hitting the ground. Shouts of alarm rang around the plaza, melding into the *clash-shhk-clang* of new weapons entering the fray.

Technoblade opened his eyes, blinking when he saw a second figure now fighting alongside Punz. A cloak and blank mask obscured their identity, but he'd recognize Dream's fighting style anywhere. Behind him, Quackity lay collapsed several feet from the lever, unconscious. Technoblade had no time to dwell on this development, however, because there was now another cloaked figure rapidly ascending the steps to his execution platform. Technoblade tensed, readying himself for a quick escape—only to double take when he saw his third ally's face.

Tommy put a finger to his lips in the universal gesture for silence. Then he grasped the metal bars of the cage and *yanked them apart*.

“Uh,” said Technoblade, and then because his brain *clearly* had its priorities straight, “Aren’t you supposed to be exiled?”

Tommy shrugged before slamming a Potion of Invisibility on the wooden boards between them. Technoblade shuddered as the magic tingled across his skin. Below, Dream and Punz pulling a similar disappearing act. The Butcher Army was left scrambling and waving their weapons around in the hopes of getting a lucky hit.

An invisible hand closed around his wrist and tugged. Left with no other choice, Technoblade followed.

---

“PULL THE LEV—*ACK?!*”

Technoblade *stared* as a mottled sea of white-brown-black fur flooded the plaza, soon overrunning the Butcher Army and beginning to clamber up Technoblade’s execution platform. The rabbits were *merciless*—several hopped straight into Fundy’s face, knocking him to the ground, where he was promptly overrun by the fluffy horde. Tubbo and Ranboo had long since disappeared under the sea of rabbits, and the only sign of Quackity was the flailing arm poking out from beneath a figurative mountain of bunnies.

“Huh,” said a voice beside him, and Technoblade whipped around to see Dream beside his cage, his hands on his hips as he surveyed the chaos around them. “That worked a lot better than I expected.”

“*Heh?*” Technoblade began, only to cut himself off when he felt something brush against his ankle. A glance downward revealed that the floor of his cage had been covered by a carpet of small, furry animals. Even as he watched, another rabbit wriggled between the bars of his cage and proceeded to make itself at home on his shoe.

“Y’know, I still think cats would’ve been better,” Dream mused as he reached up to gently pat the baby bunny sitting on his shoulder with his index finger. “...but this isn’t bad.” He looked around the plaza one last time, then clapped his hands. “Punz! To me!”

Punz slunk out of Prime knows where, face impassive despite the fact that he currently had a rabbit lounging in his hair. He raised an eyebrow and jerked his chin towards Technoblade, somehow not dislodging the animal in the process. “Are you going to break him out?”

“I was getting to that,” said Dream. He lifted the bunny off his shoulder and released it into the hordes swarming around his feet, then produced a set of keys (where had he gotten those?) and unlocked the cage. “Careful getting out,” he said to Technoblade.

Technoblade looked down at the seething carpet of small mammals. "...How?"

"You just push them aside with your foot before you step. *Gently.*"

Technoblade attempted to do as instructed, and was pleasantly surprised to find that Dream's suggestion worked. He waded out of his cage—where Dream promptly freed him from his handcuffs—before looking around at the plaza. It was now completely covered in rabbits.

"...Now what?"

"Now," said Dream, "we escape."

And so they did. Very, *very* slowly.

**218.** (*for previous part of this loop, see 215. in Chapter 43*)

"You," Dream began, then appeared to lose the ability to formulate words. He pointed at the Karl collapsed against the wall, then the one standing in the middle of the room, then back at the Karl on the floor. "The *fuck?*"

"He's me from the future," the uninjured Karl blurted. "I've been, um, explaining things to him? Uh—"

"You're in a time loop?" future-Karl demanded. He tried to sit up, only to cough violently and sag back against the wall. "*Guh*—honk, this is not going the way I thought—*ow*—"

Present-Karl seemed to be on the verge of tears. "I have Regeneration, *please* just let me give you some—"

Future-Karl waved him off. "I told you, it's not worth it. I—*urgh*—won't have much time either way. Tell me—" he pinned Dream and Tommy with a *look*, "—you're *friends* now?"

"Um," said Tommy, "Yes? Dream's not evil anymore and—wait, no, what the fuck, you're— from the future? *Our* future?"

Future-Karl studied them, eyes skipping from the naked shock on Dream's face to the tension in Tommy's shoulders to Dream's open hands and how Tommy's stance left his back open to the man. "How long have the two of you been...friends?"

The distrust in his voice had Tommy bristling. It was the same tone Tubbo or Quackity or Sam would take whenever he told them Dream was his friend in a post-exile loop. "A long time," he snapped.

"We've been in this loop for...over eight hundred years now," Dream said softly.

Future-Karl's eyes went wide. The suspicion drained from his posture, replaced with weary guilt. "Oh," he said weakly. "That's. Sorry."

"...Sorry?" Tommy echoed, eyes narrowing. "What—"

“It’s my fault,” Future-Karl admitted. “Th-the time loop, that is. That’s...my fault.”

Tommy, Dream, and Present-Karl stared at him. “What,” Present-Karl eked out.

Future-Karl slumped in on himself. “It w-was a mistake,” he said. “I didn’t—it was supposed to be a one-time trip to the past, but I...messed it up.”

Tommy inhaled sharply. If this Karl was from *their* future—the one before the loops—then he’d have *known* what Dream used to be like. And—if he’d meant to send Tommy and Dream together—“You wanted to send me and *Dream* to the past? What the fuck?”

Future-Karl blanched. “Nonono—ow, *shit*—it was supposed to be you and *Tubbo*!”

“How the *fuck* did you mix up Dream and *Tubbo*? Dream’s, like, a solid foot taller—”

“I don’t understand.” Present-Karl cut in, his face pale. “Why did you want to send them to the past in the first place? I know the future isn’t good, but—it couldn’t have been—you know sending people to the past is—”

“—last resort, I know.” Future-Karl smiled, but it was a hollow thing. “There was...no other choice.”

“No other choice than to *overwrite a timeline*? With *two* people? That would’ve—you *know* what happens when—”

“I know,” Future-Karl interrupted. “I *know*, that’s why I said n-not to waste a...” He set his jaw and looked away from his past self. “It was—it’s better than staying in the future.”

“Was it because I broke out of prison?” Dream asked quietly. Present-Karl’s head snapped towards him, but Dream kept his gaze on Future-Karl. Unexpectedly, the man snorted.

“Don’t—*hgh*—give yourself that much credit.”

“Then what...?”

Future-Karl studied them. “How much do you remember?”

Tommy squinted. “...Like, before the start of the loops? Or—”

“Yes.”

Tommy and Dream exchanged looks. “Not much,” the older looper said quietly.

Future-Karl’s eyes narrowed. “You don’t remember *anything*?”

“Only a bit,” Dream admitted. “I was fighting, I think, and then everything went white. When I woke up, I was back in the prison.”

Tommy shrugged. “Basically the same thing, ‘cept I woke up on the Prime Path. Scared the fuck out of Tubbo.”

Future-Karl eyed them for a moment. “Huh. I thought you’d remember, but...yeah, it makes sense. You were dead by then.”

A pause. “Oh,” Tommy said. Then: “Wait, what the fuck? What do you mean, we were dead?!”

Future-Karl grimaced and hunched in on himself. “Well...”

## 219. *loop zero*

### ***CW: minor graphic description of corpses, character death***

Honk. Nope. Screw this. Everything was going downhill so fast, it was almost hilarious. Except it wasn’t, because *this was bad*.

Karl curled his fingers in the fabric of his cloak. The wind scoured his vantage point and whipping his hair in his face. Said vantage point was a small ledge on the side of a mountain, peppered with some sparse vegetation that did a decent job of hiding him from view. Perfect for his purposes—he did *not* want to be seen right now.

Far below him, Technoblade unsheathed his axe and stepped up beside Dream. Philza’s wings bristled, the retired Angel of Death taking a stance behind the two. Across from them stood nearly everyone else on the server, headed by Sam and Quackity. The duck hybrid was twirling a pickaxe between his hands. Sapnap stood a little ways behind him, wielding a netherite sword and a shield.

They were a bit too far for Karl to make out what they were saying, but the sheer *hatred* in their voices made what was happening pretty clear.

“Well shit,” Karl breathed. The wind whipped his voice away. Below, the fighters bristled, weapons and shields alike rising in preparation for a fight.

For a moment, all was still.

And then Tommy surged forward, headed straight for Dream. Both sides rushed at each other, clashing in a violent whirl of sharpened netherite and flying snow. Karl squinted down at the battle, trying to keep track of who was who. It was a bit difficult to tell, given the distance and the helmets, but he was fairly sure that that was Sam, Tommy and Tubbo facing off against Dream towards the west side of the battlefield. Philza was easy to identify, what with his wings and all that, and that was Niki beside him. The person dithering on the sidelines was probably Ranboo, given how he seemed hesitant to join either side. The man driving back the five ganging up on him was Technoblade—

Karl’s knuckles went white around the fabric of his cloak when he realized *who* exactly Technoblade was fighting. Quackity took the lead alongside Sapnap, Purpled, Punz, and Fundy. It was...going alright, actually. He’d initially thought that Technoblade was overwhelming them, but now that he looked closer, he could see that they were encircling

him, working together and forcing him to divide his attention. Quackity had been practicing—Karl *knew*, he'd watched him and Sapnap sparring—and he was holding his own. A glance to the left revealed that—with Sam's help—Tommy and Tubbo were making quite a bit of headway against Dream. Philza and Niki, too, were being driven back, outnumbered and outgunned. It looked like the Syndicate was *losing*.

And then Punz turned and stabbed Quackity through the back.

Karl barely managed to keep himself from screaming. Sapnap had no such restraint. The blaze hybrid howled and lunged at Punz, sword carving a deadly arc through the air. Punz ducked just as Quackity's corpse disappeared in a puff of smoke (it hadn't been his last life, thank *Prime*) and counterattacked.

People were shouting now, voices laced with betrayal. Punz kicked Sapnap away and retreated to Dream's side. There was a momentary lull in the battle as the anti-Dream side regrouped, eyeing each other with new suspicion.

It was then that a high-pitched, whistling noise became apparent, quiet but growing steadily louder. Heads turned eastward as it reached fever pitch, just in time to see a small, oblong silhouette plummet from the sky and disappear into the forest.

For a moment, all was still. And then there was *light*.

Karl was blasted off his feet. A wave of blistering heat rolled over him, followed by a wave of dirt, the ground beneath him crumbling and rising up to swallow him. He choked and clawed desperately upwards, trying not to inhale, but the dirt was tumbling down around him and then he was plummeting down the side of the mountain and oh *honk* he hoped he didn't break his neck—

He slammed into the ground and curled into a ball, covering his head with his arms. The world was shaking, shifting, a tsunami of dirt burying him. He didn't know how long he laid there, eyes squeezed closed and mouth shut tight. His lungs screamed for air but he refused to inhale. If he did, he would inhale nothing but dirt. How long had it been? Thirty seconds? A minute? His ears were ringing. Which way was up? Was he going to die?

The world finally stilled. Karl braced himself and thrust an arm out to his right, wriggling through layers of dirt. He felt nothing but dirt, dirt, and more dirt. He forced himself to remain calm and reached out with his other arm, struggling through layers of earth until—his fingers brushed air.

He wasted no time, kicking upwards and clawing at the soil until his head broke the surface. He simply stayed there for a moment, gasping, only to choke on the taste of ozone and charred flesh. Blinking the ash from his eyes, he saw the others lying on the ground in various states of death. Most of the bodies were half-buried under the soot, burnt and mangled beyond recognition. Karl himself wasn't doing too great—though he'd been further from the blast point, he'd still been within range. If it weren't for his magic and his slightly-inhuman physiology, he would've died.

He dragged the rest of himself out onto semi-steady ground, then attempted to stand. Bad idea. His legs crumpled beneath him and he barely managed to catch himself before he faceplanted.

Okay, walking was out of the question. Crawling was...inefficient, but he'd work with what he had.

The body next to him disappeared in a puff of smoke. Good. The bomb had left all the bodies near-unrecognizable, but if those that hadn't been on their last life disappeared, then Karl would have a better chance of picking out Tommy and Tubbo. If he remembered correctly, only six people on the server would remain dead when they died. Once the others disappeared off to respawn, he'd have an easier time picking out who was who.

He didn't want to do this. Resetting was supposed to be Plan Z, a last resort that would drain him of all his power. Unfortunately, he had no other options; someone had gotten their hands on Tubbo's nukes—someone who had no qualms about killing the others. Someone who would *benefit* from a large portion of the server's inhabitants dying.

There was only one faction missing from the battle. The Eggpire.

Which, if the Eggpire really had gotten its hands on some nukes, was *really* bad news. Like, *world-ending* bad news. Worse than Dream escaping prison, though that came in close second. Karl had been considering a full Reset since Dream had been imprisoned, and this was the last straw. Long story short, this future was no longer salvageable.

He'd found records, in the Other Side, written by others of his kind who had ended up trapped by the Inbetween. They lamented various failures in Resetting and attempting to guide their timelines to a better future, and all ended abruptly—presumably after they died. One recurring idea was that they all seemed to regret sending themselves back.

Karl's kind was not meant to stay in a single timeline. As such, they were trained to remain as removed from key events as possible—something that would prove detrimental when they Reset and tried to get involved, only to find themselves without sufficient knowledge or proper connections. If Karl tried to send himself back, he'd more likely do harm than good.

Tommy and Tubbo, on the other hand, were native to the timeline and key players in everything that had happened. Their goals tended to align with creating a more *peaceful* future, a philosophy Karl agreed with. He'd have to send them back and hope for the best. Shame he hadn't gathered enough energy to toss in three people, though. He'd have liked a chance to record this in the Other Side.

He looked down and blinked at the sudden bout of color that assaulted his senses. Red. Blood. *His* blood. Karl squinted at himself, and suddenly realized there was a very unsightly gash across his torso—likely a wound from a piece of sharp debris. The sound of a ticking clock overpowered the ringing in his ears.

Well. That wasn't good.



Karl began crawling forward at a more urgent pace. He had to send them back before he kicked the bucket.

“*Karl?!*”

Karl’s heart stopped. And started again, thankfully. He ignored Quackity as the other man shouted his name again, dragging himself towards the first corpse he could see.

It was laying facedown, thankfully. Karl wasn’t in the mood to see another mutilated face. Unfortunately, the corpse had a large, charred mass of bone and flesh on its back. Philza, then—not who he was looking for. Karl grimaced and inched past, sending up a silent prayer for the man.

The next corpse was much harder to identify. Karl squinted at it—the only real defining feature was the scorched netherite armor, which was caked in white ash. His eye caught on something—a blackened, crumpled object with a shattered chain still half-curved around the corpse’s neck. Karl forced himself to his knees and picked it up, turning it over in his hands.

It was a compass. Dented and warped beyond repair, glass shattered, the metal radiating heat that burned his skin. Only three of the letters engraved on the back were still legible.

*Y      ub*

Your Tubbo. Looks like this corpse was Tommy.

And yup, that was Tubbo, right next to him—decked out in netherite armor too. They had been standing together when the bomb hit, so they were conveniently laid out right next to each other. Small blessings.

Karl bit the inside of his cheek and gently laid a hand on the head of each corpse. Tommy’s skull crumpled like eggshell under his touch and he recoiled, wide-eyed.

Quackity called his name again. He sounded much closer. Karl took a deep breath and steeled himself, refusing to turn around. Soon, his fiancé would be gone—along with the rest of this future. He didn’t want to look at him. Look at what he’d be *losing*.

(But he’d lose him anyway, if things went on like this. At least in the new future Quackity would be happy, even if he forgot everything they’d been through together.)

With a fresh bout of determination, he laid his hands on both corpses and called up his magic. It welled up deep inside him, wrapped within his core. With an exhale, he reached inwards and tore it open.

The magic *exploded* out of him, racing up and engulfing him and the two bodies. He could hear Quackity screaming in the distance, but he ignored it, reaching *further* and hurling his own consciousness through the fabric of reality.

And suddenly he could see. See the strings of time, converging and weaving together into a single golden ribbon. The timeline. *His* timeline.

Something deep in his very being ached with longing. *This* was where he was supposed to be. Floating outside of time, surrounded by timelines of every shape and color and consistency and—

White strings snaked around him. A warning. He hadn't found a way to free himself of the Inbetween yet, and it didn't take kindly to him straying from the path. It was a shame he'd never get a chance to break free, but he had to do this—if not for himself, then for the humans he'd grown so attached to.

Karl reached and pulled strings from his own being. They wove themselves into a path, violet merging seamlessly with the golden strings of the timeline. The white strings jerked, tearing into his skin, but he breathed through the pain and watched as his strings did the work. When the job was finished, he braced himself and tugged on the string tethering him to his physical body.

He slammed back into the third dimension at full force and nearly vomited with the stress of it, but he forced himself to go on. He had no other choice—the path was already woven, and if he didn't finish what he'd started, he would cause damage to the very fabric of this universe.

Karl inhaled, focusing on the path humming through his veins. His magic wrapped around Tommy and Tubbo, pulling their souls from Limbo. It was a delicate process, akin to extracting a ladybug from molasses with a pair of tweezers. Limbo clung to them even as he pulled them back. It took a bit of fancy fingerwork to brush it away, but once it was gone, it was much easier to reel the two of them in.

Then it was just the matter of dropping the souls onto the path, something he did with ease. The door to the pathway began to shut, disconnecting from him as the two travelers moved back through time.

Something niggled at the back of his mind. He paused, squinting at the path. Something felt...wrong, somehow.

He opened his eyes in the physical world and turned to look down. He ignored the ash and the blood and netherite and *looked*, deeper, at the little details.

There was something half-buried in the ash beside Tubbo's head, charred and blackened beyond recognition. It wasn't netherite, because netherite *warped* under concussive force, but this object was all jagged edges and burnt porcelain—

He realized too late that the corpse underneath his hand wasn't Tubbo.

No, it was Dream, mask shattered and half-buried in the soot. Karl instantly stuck a metaphorical foot in the door, forcing it to remain open. He fought with himself for a brief moment, struggling to redirect the flow of time and drag Dream back, but he had already created the path. It couldn't be undone. In a last-ditch effort, he threw himself in with them, dropping a third traveler onto the path that had been prepared for two.

Everything went wrong. Karl could only watch in horror as the timeline wrenched free of his control, spinning about, splitting into two tails and crashing back in, threading multiple times through itself and looping back and forth until he could no longer tell where it started and where it ended. In one last futile reach he threw himself forward, pushing all that remained of his power into the bindings, trying desperately to unravel the knot.

But nobody could fight against the flow of time, not even him. He was soon swept away in the currents, dragged under, tossed back and forth in the raging tides of time until they spat him out somewhere *very* far from home, an unnamed domain outside of the very universe. It had no name, just like it had no being. Its very existence was a paradox, and it tore him apart. The nothingness devoured him even as his very being unraveled. He was everything and nothing, everywhere and nowhere at once, galaxies and worlds bursting into existence and crumbling to ashes before his eyes. It hurt, hurt like nothing he had ever felt before, and he would have screamed if he could, but the darkness had swallowed his voice, and what little consciousness he had left could not comprehend anything but everything. He was in awe. He was in agony. No mortal should have ever laid eyes on the secrets of the universe, the sheer magnitude of it all. He was being torn, pieces chipped away little by little—

## 220.

There was a flash of light, maybe two, and he was glued back together, gravity pulling the strings of his fractured mind tight. Memories of agony faded into forgotten echoes. The void fled from him, aching nothingness dissipating as he was stitched together, bit by bit, until he was himself, him, whole and only a little broken. He marveled at the feeling of stability, of being solid.

The Inbetween *pulled*. He resisted—he needed more time, more time to gather his thoughts, to realize his new state of existence—but the universe never listened to anyone. Everything went white, then black, and then he was falling, crashing to the floor of his library.

Or more accurately, the floor of his *past* library. The one in Kinoko Kingdom. The one that had been destroyed months ago.

“Ow,” he groaned, slowly struggling to his knees. “Hah...looks like...looks like it worked.”

The only answer was the *tick-tock-tick* of the clock on the wall. With a grunt of effort, he dragged himself over to a wall and fell against it, wincing as his back smarted. He took a deep breath, then tried to raise the hem of the rags that had been his hoodie to assess the damage. He yelped when his entire torso flared with pain, dropping the hem and curling forwards in a futile effort to ease the agony.

“Okay,” he choked out. “Maybe—maybe not such a great idea. Where are the regen pots when you need them?”

Not that regen would help him, Karl realized. He felt—unsettled, *wrong*, as though something was scratching at him on a molecular level. The howling void where his magic

had once been threatened to consume him from the inside out; even if his physical body was healed, the absence of what essentially made up his true form would kill him sooner or later.

And then there was the timeline. *Prime*, the timeline. He had given everything for it, and now, it saw him as an intruder—because there was already a Karl here. A Karl younger both in body and soul. The timeline had no need for *duplicates* from a future that never was. He could feel it pulling tight around him, identifying the parasite and preparing to hurl it into the void.

The only way Karl could avoid that fate was by dying—destroying *one* duplicate—before the timeline tore him free.

*Tick-tock-tick*, went the clock. Karl blinked back tears and leaned back against the wall, ignoring the flare of pain that shot down his spine.

“I’m gonna die,” he said aloud. Saying it made it feel more final, somehow. “Sorry to whoever finds my corpse in here. Can’t even say it’s a pretty corpse.”

It wasn’t a pretty way to die, either. The heat had cauterized most of his minor wounds, but he was now sporting third degree burns all over his body. The deep gash across the front of his torso was still bleeding. His clothes were in tatters. He looked like he’d just walked out of the apocalypse. Which. Wasn’t all wrong, technically.

“I really messed up,” he admitted to the empty room. He’d sent Tommy into the past with his *abuser*, and he couldn’t do anything to fix it. He couldn’t even *move* in the state he was in, and soon he’d be dead. “Dunno how it’s going to go from now.”

*Tick-tock-tick*, said the clock. It sounded disparaging. Annoyed. It knew he wasn’t being honest.

“That was a lie,” he whispered. Bile joined the blood and ash mixing at the back of his throat. “It’s—gonna go bad. I’ve doomed this timeline. Can’t...can’t even do anything about it. I’m *useless*.”

*Tick-tock-tick-tock*.

His eyes were burning. He wasn’t sure if he could lift his arms enough to wipe the tears away, so he threw his head back against the wall and *laughed*. “*Prime*—I ruined *everything*—this one chance and I can’t—”

*Tick-tock-tick*, the clock admonished. He slumped in on himself as his laughter twisted into bitter self-loathing. “Stupid. I gave him all the time in the world. What—do you think he’s—gonna do?”

Destroy the world, probably. Tear down Tommy once and for all. Take over the server and crush its inhabitants in a madman’s bid for power. And all because Karl unwittingly gave him a second chance.

Then again, maybe Dream would see the light. Use his second chance for good to avoid Pandora's Vault. Or maybe he'd run away from the Dream SMP altogether and leave everyone alone. But then, of course, the Egg would just destroy everything again.

Fuck it all, really. He'd just destroyed a chunk of his timeline, effectively killing his own friends. He'd made a mess of the rest of the timeline, and didn't even know what the effects would be. He didn't know what was going to happen with Dream and Tommy, didn't know what was going to happen to the timeline, and he never would because he was going to die.

But at his core, Karl had always been an optimist. He tried to see the good in people. Tried to find ways to fix the future. Tried to break free from the Inbetween again and again, even when all other recorded attempts had failed. He wasn't going to spend his last moments in despair when there was a chance that Tommy—because Karl *knew* the power Tommy had—could fix things and sway Dream to his side. It was a slim chance, but it was *there*.

“Hope—is useless,” Karl mused aloud. “But...it’s the only thing—I—*hah*—have left.”

*Tick-tock*, the clock answered.

His chest flared with pain, prompting another round of coughing. “Well,” he rasped when it finally settled, “never thought—I’d be trusting—*Dream* of all people.” He inhaled, sinking further back against the wall. In a few moments, he wouldn't have to worry about anything anymore. “’S up...to them...I guess.”

The world was going gray around the edges. He blinked slowly, watching as it faded in and out of view. The pain went with it, melting into a distant sort of discomfort before dissipating. His breathing stuttered, stopped, and failed to restart.

*Tick-tock-tick*, went the clock.

## Chapter End Notes

FANART!

Marble Sys drew this [very colorful and glittery ot!Dream](#) :D

Ren rerecorded his song, “temporize”, and Maosnaknan (mason what happened to ur name) also rerecorded his version, but I can’t link it here (;v; ) go listen to them in the ot-fanart channel on the Discord!

Jordan drew the [chess loop](#)—specifically, Wilbur being attacked. I am cackling  
Ivy redrew [some scenes from ot!!!](#) And here’s the [old version](#)! (her geometric style is so cool ajskdfjklsd)

New inspired works!! :D

This fun (read: angsty) fic about [dsmp characters in a modern au reacting to glitterduo](#)!

An [Owl House timeloop fic](#) yooooo

If I forgot to mention your work, please let me know! (^^)

### **Loop Notes**

**216.** Additional scenes not added: Purpled is also bribed into giving a hug, then watches in consternation as Tommy steals Dogchamp (don't worry, the animal is eventually returned). Eret takes Tommy on a piggyback tour through the castle. George and Sapnap are very confused when Dream shows up at their doorstep with a small child under his arm and demands that they hug said small child. Fundy teases Tommy mercilessly because he's now shorter than him. Tommy coerces Ranboo into allowing him to sit on his shoulders, then proceeds to T-pose over Fundy with the borrowed height. Skeppy is overjoyed to find someone who's around his height, and teaches Tommy how to use a longsuffering Bad as a jungle gym.

**220.** [Just a fun little thing!](#)

# Chapter 45

## Chapter Notes

I am now coming to realize this fic is actually just twenty different fics in a trench coat. First chapter over 12k wooh!! (never again. my brain is fried)

### Spotlighted Comments

**1\_Iced\_Tea:** Tommy took "kill then with kindness" to a whole new level

**BlueCalibriFont:** \*shakes Karl gently\* MY BROTHER IN PRIME YOU CAN'T JUST PULL THIS KINDA SHIT AND THEN DIE HGGSGGAGS WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO WITH ALL THIS LORE *vibrates violently into the fifth dimension*

**OddCarrot:** This is reader cruelty

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

### **221.** *(credit to Danichispa)*

Dream opened his eyes to see Tommy looming over him with an axe wound back. “—Axe of Peace,” the younger looper said, then visibly paused as he took stock of the situation they had looped into. Dream checked to make sure his own expression of desperation was in place before he allowed relief to flood his veins.

He wasn’t in the prison. And now that Tommy knew the truth about what had happened in Pandora’s Vault, he wouldn’t let Dream be thrown back in. Probably. That’s what he’d said, at least.

Tommy lowered the axe, his expression inscrutable as he studied Dream. Behind him, Tubbo stepped out of the semicircle of armed Players surrounding the two of them. “...Tommy?” he called hesitantly.

“I changed my mind,” Tommy said. His axe dispelled in a burst of inventory particles. “This bastard doesn’t deserve death.”

Dream’s heart plummeted into his stomach. For a moment, he was afraid that he’d been wrong—that Tommy would indeed send him back to that hellhole—

But then Tommy smirked and said, “We’re sending him to therapy.”

**Dream.exe has crashed.**

*>Check for a solution and close program*

*>Close program*

> *Wait for response*

It was Tubbo's dumbfounded "What?" that snapped Dream out of it. And by snapped out of it, he meant that he let out a very undignified "*bwuh?*"

"Everyone deserves a chance to be reformed," Tommy declared grandly, turning to the crowd and spreading his arms in a show of moral preeminence as though they hadn't all just watched him brutally murder Dream twice literally a minute ago. "And honestly, death is too nice for this guy. Prison will just add to his villain origin story. So let's put him on house arrest and force him to get therapy. And maybe some community service. Not sure about that yet."

Everyone, including Dream, stared at Tommy like he'd just revealed himself to be three raccoons in a trench coat.

"Tommy," Sam began slowly, "we...can't do that."

Tommy blinked innocently. "Why not?"

Sam didn't seem to know how to respond politely. Which was fair, because it was difficult to phrase "are you high?" in a way that wouldn't cause offense.

"We'll put him in therapy," Tommy declared when nobody stepped up to protest. Probably because they were all too confused to formulate a response that didn't consist of the words "what", "the", and "fuck". Dream would've been amused if he wasn't in the same boat. Tommy, in true Tommy fashion, remained unperturbed by the silence. "You all can stick an ankle monitor on him, right? Keep him stuck in a house? Eh, L'Manberg did it to Phil, we can do it to Dream. Puffy!"

Puffy jolted at the sound of her name, then winced as all eyes turned to her. Tommy ignored the tension in the air, pasted on his best bullshit smile, and said, "Can you therapize the evil out of Dream?"

"Erm," said Puffy.

Tommy's smile increased in Bullshitting Levels. "Pog! We'll work out a schedule once Dream figures out his new routine. Now if you'll excuse me, I'm gonna go drag Dream to his new house. Tubs, can you come with me? I need an anklet for him."

And with that, he grabbed Tubbo's wrist with one hand, the back of Dream's cloak by the other, and began dragging them both towards the portal. The crowd parted like the red sea, most people too unused to Tommy's particular brand of Figuratively And Literally Steamrolling Over Obstacles Until They Disappear™ to even consider stopping him.

At least it would be better than Pandora's Vault, right?

Right?

---



“Punz. Help me. Please. I’m begging.”

Punz side-eyed Dream with much judgment. Dream felt judged. He didn’t deserve judgment.

“*Please*. I’ll pay you to make me go missing for twenty-four hours.”

“You have a therapy session with Puffy today, don’t you,” Punz drawled.

“Yes, and *I don’t want to go*.”

“So your solution is for me to disappear you.”

“Puffy is making me talk about my *problems*, Punz. I don’t like it.”

“Talking about your problems so you can process them and begin healing is a healthy and helpful process—”

“Not you too,” Dream groaned, turning away and tugging at his hair. “Look, things were easier—*are* easier when I’m the bad guy. Black and white.”

“Doesn’t make them better,” Punz pointed out. Fuck him for being logical. Logic sucked.

“You suck,” Dream told Punz.

“Go to therapy, Dream,” said Punz.

Dream flipped him off.

---

“Let me get this straight. You want to use the favor to...get out of therapy.”

“Yeah.”

Technoblade squinted at him. “...Isn’t therapy part of your rehabilitation or somethin’? Like, part of the agreement that makes sure you don’t get thrown in jail?”

“Yes, but—look, I just don’t want to go, okay?”

“You do realize therapy is supposed to be *beneficial*?”

“I have to talk about my *feelings*, Technoblade. Puffy keeps trying to get me to open up about stuff and I *hate it*.”

Technoblade looked at him for a long moment, then said, “I could kill Puffy—”

“NO!”

“It would get you out of therapy,” Technoblade pointed out. “Permanently.”

Dream spluttered incoherently, looking so genuinely distraught that Technoblade took pity on him. “I was jokin’,” the piglin assured him. “I don’t kill without good reason. So unless you want me to kill Puffy or you—”

“There’s *no other way* to get me out of therapy?”

“You could finish your sessions.”

Dream threw up his hands and stomped away.

---

“Hello, Dream. How are you feeling today?”

Dream crossed his arms and chewed on the inside of his cheek. He *really* didn’t want to divulge more to Puffy than he already had. Anything he gave to her, she could use against him—and every time he reflected on the past, he was forced to confront what he’d done. In short, he didn’t want to talk to Puffy. But if he didn’t, he might get thrown in jail for shirking his sentence.

“Dream?” Puffy asked gently, and Dream winced when he realized he’d been quiet for too long. Before he could start spewing insincere apologies, though, Puffy sat back in her chair. “Do you not want to talk today?”

Dream, blindsided, could only nod hesitantly. He realized too late that it might’ve been a trap, but Puffy was already smiling and rising from her seat. Dream watched in bewilderment as she trotted over to a cabinet and fished out a stack of board games. She nudged the side table into the space between their chairs and plopped the boxes down.

“If you don’t feel like talking, we can just play some board games today,” she said. “I have some craft kits if you want to do those instead. Do you have a preference?”

Dream stared at her. “You’re not going to make me talk?”

“Therapy is supposed to *help* you, Dream. It might be part of your sentence, but it’s not a punishment. If you don’t want to talk today, I’m not going to make you. So do you want board games or crafts?”

“...What craft kits do you have?”

"Dream, what the fuck are you doing?"

"Doing what?" Dream asked, turning the crochet plushie of himself to face an appalled Sapnap. Sapnap pointed at the doll.

"That. Why. What is that."

"Uh." Dream bent the doll's head so that it appeared to be peering down at its own body. Then he had it look back up at Sapnap. "It's...me?"

"I—*no it's not?*"

"Yes it is!"

"That's a—a *doll*, Dream—"

"How dare you! I'm a *marketable plushie*, not some *children's toy*!"

"—and why the fuck are you talking like that?"

"This is how I normally talk!"

"Yeah, if you swallowed a tank of helium!"

Dream was indeed speaking at a pitch worthy of *Alvin and the Chipmunks*, but it wasn't like he was going to acknowledge that. The look of *sheer disbelief* on Sapnap's face made the damage to his vocal cords completely worth it. "You're being really judgmental today, Sapnap. I feel really judged."

Sapnap stared at him for several long seconds, then did the rational thing and turned and walked away.

Dream raised the marketable plushie's arm and waved it at his retreating back. "Bye Sapnap! Nice talk!"

Sapnap started jogging.

---

"Uh—ten paces, fire...?"

Nobody could fault Wilbur for his bewildered hesitance. After Dream and Tommy had begun parading around with their "marketable plushies", any form of actual "fighting" had turned into—more or less—a joke. Every attempt at physical confrontation was usually resolved before it began, because everyone else on the battlefield would be too busy staring at Dream and Tommy as they attempted to battle it out by wielding their dolls like action figures. It all came to a head when Tommy suggested a duel for L'Manberg's independence—which was

how they ended up at this bridge, watching as Dream and Tommy prepared to duke it out with children's toys.

"DIE!" Tommy howled, whipping around and hurling his doll at Dream. Dream ducked. The Tommy doll went sailing over his head and hit the bridge with a "plop". Dream popped up and hurled his own doll at Tommy, hitting him square in the face.

"OW FUCK NOT THE BUTTONS!" Tommy reeled back, clamping one hand over the rapidly-reddening spot left behind by one of the doll's black button eyes. He glowered at Dream. "Would it have *killed* you to use softer materials?!"

"Would it have killed you to use sturdier materials?" Dream shot back, picking up Tommy's ragdoll. It was now slightly scuffed and sporting an unflattering tear along its arm.

Tommy shrieked. Glass shattered somewhere in the distance. "MY ARM! YOU BASTARD!"

"YOU THREW YOURSELF AT ME! THIS IS ON YOU!"

Tommy tackled Dream with a loud "FUCK YOU!" They went down in a tangle of flailing limbs and angry screeching.

"So can we have independence now?" Fundy called.

---

"C'mon Wil, you gotta let me be your vice! I gave up so much for L'Manberg!" Tommy held up his doll, which was now dressed in formalwear. "I even made a suit for this!"

Wilbur coughed, studiously looking anywhere *but* the disturbingly well-made suit Tommy had made for his doll. "I know, Tommy. I really appreciate your sacrifices, and the suit looks great on, um, on you, but—I can't."

Tommy scowled and crossed the doll's arms. "Why not?"

"Well, um, I just...think Fundy might have a better handle on, er, presidential affairs."

Tommy turned the head of the doll towards the scene a ways away. Wilbur followed his gaze. Fundy had somehow gotten his tail tangled in his own fishing line and, in attempting to untangle it, had fallen into the lake. Niki and Jack were frantically trying to get him out, while Tubbo just stood on the sidelines pointing and laughing.

"You want Fundy to be your vice," Tommy said.

"...Yes."

They watched as Niki and Jack finally hauled a quite bedraggled Fundy onto the lakeshore. Then Tommy turned to Wilbur and beamed. "Alright then! You have my blessing!"

Wilbur blinked. “You...don’t mind him being vice?”

Tommy beamed harder. “Oh no, I thought you were gonna have Jack or Tubbo run as your vice. Fundy’s cool.”

“What’s wrong with Jack and Tubbo?”

“He’s *Jack*,” Tommy emphasized. Then his eyes grew distant. “And Tubbo is just...”

He shuddered. Without finishing his sentence, he turned and trotted away, leaving Wilbur even more bewildered than before.

---

"Why does Schlatt look like he's about to jump out of his overpriced leather shoes?"

Tubbo made an odd *snerk* noise, then attempted to disguise it as a cough. "Er—why are you asking me?"

Quackity *stared* at him.

Tubbo sighed. "Okay, fine, I—I might’ve, um, commissioned Tommy to make a doll that looks like him."

"And let me guess," Quackity deadpanned, "you put it on his bed while he was sleeping."

"I hid it in his shower, actually."

Quackity slowly shook his head. "You," he said, "are fucking *terrifying*. Don’t get me wrong, Schlatt deserves it—but *damn*."

Tubbo’s answering smile was all teeth.

---

The server members eventually got used to it. Dream and Tommy talked through dolls in a chipmunk-style voice. Sure, it was weird, but they had no other choice but to accept it as a strange quirk and move on. Besides, it could be worse.

It was hard to imagine how, but it *could* be worse.

Probably.

---

Then it got worse.

---

Technoblade looked at the small crocheted Dream at his feet, then at the Tommy ragdoll standing beside it.

“This is disturbin’,” he informed them flatly. “I am disturbed.”

“Well fuck you,” Tommy squeaked. “How’d you like it if someone told you *you* were disturbing?”

“People fear what they do not understand,” Dream chirped.

Technoblade pointed at him. “Don’t quote Andrew Smith at me.” His finger swung around to point at Tommy. “And I think talkin’ dolls are *objectively* terrifyin’. You can’t tell me I’m wrong.”

“You are wrong,” Tommy told him. Technoblade didn't know why he'd ever expected anything different. “I’ve *always* been like this, I don’t get why you’re freaking out *now*. Sounds like a you problem, really.”

Technoblade looked up to the heavens and let out a long, *long* sigh.

---

"You bastards," Glatt hissed, waving his tiny plush arms around. "You die and *this* is what you decide to do for the rest of your afterlife?"

“It’s funny,” Toast said.

“It’s *disturbing*,” Glatt corrected. He looked down at himself. “Don’t you all find this confining at all? I’m literally squishing myself to possess this thing—”

“No, it’s easy to shrink yourself once you know what you’re doing.” Dreaxter dismissively waved one of his arms in lieu of a hand, because he did not have hands to wave. “Also, possessing a corpse is a *lot* more disturbing than possessing a doll, so it could be worse.”

Glatt stared at him. “Possessing a *corpse*?”

“Yeah, you know, our bodies,” Toast said. Which. What the *fuck*? “We needed *some* way to interact with the world, you know? What was I supposed to do, possess a chair?”

“I can move things without possessing something,” Glatt pointed out even as his brain repeated a mantra of *what the fuck?* like a broken record. “You can turn the intangibility on and off.”

Dream and Tommy exchanged glances—which was *really fucking creepy* to witness, given that their faces were incapable of expression. “This is more fun,” said Tommy.

Glatt nodded slowly, then pointed at the other two ghosts. “Stay the fuck away from me.”

“Okay!” Dream chirped. He saluted—or tried, anyway, given that his arms weren’t quite long enough to reach his forehead. “See you later!”

Glatt vacated his doll vessel and fled into the depths of the earth. He was *not* staying around for whatever shitshow those two caused.

## 223.

Tommy was...odd.

Not in a bad way—Tommy was Ranboo’s friend, and Ranboo would trust him with his life. It was just that...he couldn’t help but get the sense that Tommy was *hiding* something. He was loud and boisterous most of the time, but Ranboo had noticed that he used it to hide his jumpiness around other people. He kept everyone at arms length and had a tendency to flinch whenever someone got too close—especially to his back. Sometimes, he’d find the other teen just standing there and staring up at the sky for no apparent reason.

The most glaring oddity, though, was the large, baggy hoodie Tommy always wore—even in the sweltering heat of a L’Manberg summer. “He started a little bit before we got independence,” Tubbo had confided when Ranboo had quietly asked him about it. “We don’t know why—he always brushes it off or changes the subject whenever we bring it up.”

Then he’d leaned in and added, even more quietly, “Wilbur thinks Dream has something to do with it.”

Ranboo had been surprised, then—Dream had been nothing but polite since his first day on the server. After he’d learned the history of L’Manberg, though, and how Dream had been completely against independence until Tommy had pulled him aside for a private conversation—

Well. Even Ranboo had to admit that that looked odd.

---

“Um,” said Ranboo.

Tommy's head snapped up from where he was bent over a mass of feathers. He gaped at Ranboo. Ranboo, standing in the doorway, gaped back.

"This isn't what it looks like!" Tommy blurted, his—*wings*, because *apparently* he had those—snapping shut and pressing up to his back in an effort to hide themselves. While the effort was appreciated, Tommy's torso was not *nearly* wide enough to conceal the feathers peeking out from behind it.

"You have wings?" Ranboo blurted, mentally rearranging what he knew about Tommy. The baggy hoodie must've helped conceal it, and he avoided physical contact to avoid discovery. He had no idea *why* Tommy would hide it from them, though—did he feel unsafe? Had something happened that made him—

"NO!" Tommy screeched, jolting Ranboo from his spiraling thoughts. "I—I don't have—this isn't—uh, this is—"

When Ranboo just kept staring at him, he sighed. His shoulders slumped.

"...Yeah. I have wings."

Ranboo had many questions. The foremost being— "Does—does anyone else know?"

Tommy eyed him, likely trying to assess his motivations. "...One other person," he said slowly. "I'm not telling you who. And no, it's not Wil or Tubbo."

"Does *Phil* know?"

"Fuck no. He'd go all mother-hen instincts on me."

Ranboo nodded to himself. Okay. So. Wings. His friend had wings. Nobody except for him and one other person knew. Tommy did not *want* other people to know. Which was. Concerning.

"...Why did you hide it?" he asked. Tommy snorted.

"I'm not about to give people more shit to use against me." Tommy's eyes went sharp. "You're not gonna tell anyone, right?"

There was a whole lot to unpack in what Tommy had just said, but Ranboo knew that keeping Tommy's trust took precedence. So he took a breath, stood up straighter, and promised, "I won't tell anyone."

"And you'll help me hide it."

Well, Tommy seemed to be hiding it pretty well already—but it wouldn't hurt for him to have help. "And I'll help you hide it."

Tommy beamed at him. Ranboo found himself smiling back even as his worries about paranoia and Tommy's mental health itched at the back of his mind. Tommy was his friend, and he'd never regret helping him feel safe.



---

Ranboo regretted it.

When he'd agreed to help Tommy hide his wings, he hadn't expected Tommy's sudden inability to keep the very secret he'd made Ranboo swear to protect. In all honesty, it was probably just that Ranboo was noticing more clues now that he knew about the wings. Sometimes, though, it felt like Tommy was *intentionally* dropping hints to mess with Ranboo.

Case in point: on a nice, sunny day, Ranboo had come across Tubbo on his way to Technoblade's home. Tubbo had been headed in the same direction, so they'd agreed to walk together. Ranboo had been enjoying their chat about Tubbo's new apiary when a shadow passed over the two of them. They looked up in time to see a streak of red and white zip through the sky above. Tubbo gasped. Ranboo...made a slightly delayed noise of surprise. And horror. Mostly horror.

"Did you see that?" Tubbo demanded, wheeling to face him. "The thing in the sky?"

"Th—the bird?" Ranboo tried, desperately hoping that Tubbo would accept the suggested explanation and move on.

Tubbo did not. "That was way too big to be a bird," he said. "Maybe some other animal? What's big and flies?"

"Uhhhh," said Ranboo, trying very hard to think of an explanation that wasn't 'our best friend has wings and has been hiding it from us for a very long time'. "...Mothman?"

Tubbo slowly turned to stare at him. Ranboo's last remaining braincell began screeching *ABORT! ABORT!* but Ranboo had never listened to his braincells.

"Yep. Probably Mothman."

His last remaining braincell wailed in despair. Ranboo offered Tubbo a wide, not-at-all-nervous-what-are-you-talking-about smile.

"You think Mothman is real?" Tubbo asked. "You've never struck me as a conspiracy theory kinda guy."

"Yeah, um, I'm just—really good at hiding it?" Ooooo, his voice was pitching up towards the end there. Not good. Who decided to put Ranboo in charge of lying? Oh right, he did. He *sucked*. "I'm uh, too nervous, usually, to talk to people about the stuff I believe. So."

To his relief, the suspicion melted away from Tubbo's face. "Makes sense," the shorter boy muttered. Then his frown morphed into a manic smile. "*So*, Ranboo, what *other* conspiracies do you believe in?"

Uh oh. “I’m not sure you’d want to listen to me ramble—it’s honestly kinda embarrassing—”

“Oh no, I’m curious!” Tubbo assured him. Or he tried to, at least. It was not assuring at all because *Ranboo was lying and did not want to have to expand on conspiracy theories that he in fact did not believe in*. “I’m a conspiracy theorist too, so it’s always great to hear other people talk about their theories!”

Ranboo laughed nervously to hide that he was internally wringing his last braincell for ideas. In the throes of death, it choked out, *the earth is flat!*

And so Ranboo spent the next two hours attempting to convince Tubbo that he was a flat earther. It was not a fun two hours.

---

It was the one-year anniversary of L’Manberg’s establishment. The whole server had gathered in the L’Manberg plaza for a festival. Ranboo stayed close to Tommy and Tubbo—not just because he knew them the best, but also to cover for Tommy if something happened. Tommy always got jumpy in large crowds—with so many people around, someone was likely to bump into his back and notice the odd mass that wasn’t supposed to be there. So Ranboo stayed in step with Tommy, guarding his back and making sure he always had a bubble of space around him.

Because he was looking out for it, he noticed the fluffy white feather that slipped out of the hem of Tommy’s hoodie. Ranboo hastily moved to sweep it up—only for another hand to enter his field of vision and scoop up the feather before he could.

Ranboo’s eyes slid up to meet Dream’s. Cold horror shot down his spine—had Dream *seen* where the feather came from? Was he going to confront Tommy? Shoot, this was all Ranboo’s fault—if he’d just been *faster* to pick up the feather—

Dream smiled at him, all disarming kindness and charm even as he squirreled Tommy’s feather away. “Hello, Ranboo,” he said. Then his voice took on a slightly more... commiserating tone. “Don’t worry, I’ll take care of this one.”

Ranboo just stared blankly at him. What did that mean? ‘This one’? As in ‘this feather’? Why would be Dream ‘take care’ of Tommy’s feathers—oh.

*Oh.*

“*You’re* the other person?!” Ranboo shrieked, pointing at Dream. Dream blinked owlishly at him, his shoulders shifting oddly beneath his baggy green hoodie.

“What other person?” he asked—in perfect unison with Tubbo.

It occurred to Ranboo that he was currently standing in the middle of a crowd, most of whom were now looking at him. *It also* occurred to Ranboo that he was trying to keep Tommy’s

wings a secret. Oops.

“N-nevermind. Sorry. I. Thought you were someone else. Yeah.”

Dream was staring at him. Or maybe he was trying to communicate to Ranboo how much of an idiot he was through telepathy. It was okay. Ranboo already knew.

Luckily, Tommy chose that moment to trip over his own feet and “accidentally” spill punch all over Schlatt. In the ensuing commotion, everyone soon forgot about Ranboo and Dream’s strange interaction.

---

At approximately 2:39 AM the next morning, Ranboo bolted upright from his bed, inhaled, and screeched, “WAIT DREAM HAS WINGS TOO.”

Thankfully, nobody was around to witness his impromptu mental breakdown.

---

It all came to a head when Ranboo sleepwalked off a cliff.

He hadn’t thought his sleepwalking was a problem. Most of the time, he ended up in another room in his house, or in his front yard. The furthest he’d ever gone was the Prime Path, and he’d awoken to a concerned Dream herding him back towards his house. Dream had suggested that he go to Ponk for sleep medication after that incident, and while he still had the occasional moment of waking up in some unknown place, he’d never walked so far again.

Until now, at least. After a week-long debacle wherein the server had to gang up to save Schlatt from possession by a sentient egg (and oh boy was that a sentence that Ranboo never thought he’d hear), he’d been exhausted. So exhausted, in fact, that he hadn’t bothered to change into his pajamas or take his medication before he dropped. Which was an oversight, as he was realizing now.

The sound of voices lulled him to wakefulness. He groaned, rubbing sleep from his eyes, only to nearly trip over his own feet when he realized he was running. A quick glance backward revealed over half a dozen people chasing him and attempting to corral him from all sides. “Ranboo!” Tubbo shouted, eyes wild with panic. “Ranboo, stop!”

Ranboo stumbled to a stop, pivoting so he faced his pursuers—and the early morning sun rising from the horizon beyond them. How long had he been sleepwalking? Where was he? Why was everyone chasing him?

Had he done something while he was sleepwalking?

“Ranboo,” another voice said. Tommy was half-crouched in front of Tubbo, knees bent like he was ready to spring forward. One of his arms reached out towards Ranboo, palm down like he was trying to placate a terrified animal. The other barred Tubbo from approaching. “You need to step forward.”

“I-I don’t understand,” Ranboo stammered. “Where—what—how did I get here?”

“You sleepwalked,” Tommy said, and took a step towards him. Ranboo took an automatic step back—and found nothing but air.

For one frozen moment, Ranboo saw Tommy’s eyes go wide. And then he was tipping backwards, off the edge of what he now recognized to be the crater where the Egg had previously lain, right before they blew it down to bedrock.

The good news was that the walls of the crater were concave, so he probably wouldn’t bash his head on the way down. The bad news was that it was a *long way down*.

Ranboo screamed as he plunged headfirst into the depths of the earth. The wind howled in his ears as he flailed desperately upwards, looking for something, *anything*, to save him. The world spun in dizzying circles—charred stone and dirt and sky and darkness at the bottom of the pit and he *couldn’t see*—

Something grabbed ahold of his ankles and *yanked*. The air punched out of Ranboo and his vision went black for several terrifying seconds. When the spots cleared, he found himself dangling upside-down over the crater—but ascending, propelled by Tommy’s furious wingbeats. They cleared the top of the crater to the sound of shouts from the people crowded at the edge. Tommy’s vertical ascent leveled out as he swerved towards safer ground—and in doing so, he swung Ranboo.

Ranboo shrieked, instinctively kicking and twisting in Tommy’s grasp. The other teen grunted, feathers flaring even as his flight path took an alarming dip. “Hey—Ran, calm down, *shit*—you’re too *heavy*, dammit—DREAM!”

Something went *fwump-WHOOSH* below them. The shouts of horror from their audience turned into surprise just as Tommy’s grip slipped. Ranboo screamed as he plunged towards the ground—only to violently reverse direction when something hooked under his flailing arms and yanked him upwards. Ranboo nearly gave himself whiplash trying to see what was happening, and—woah.

“Stop wiggling!” Dream shouted over the wind, his wings flapping furiously as he struggled to keep them both aloft. Ranboo forced himself to go still, remaining rigid as a marble statue in Dream’s grip. They were rapidly approaching the side of the pit, which was all well and good—except Ranboo didn’t know how they were going to land.

“I’m going to drop you,” Dream warned as they swooped over the edge of the crater and into safe territory. Ranboo flinched, and Dream cursed. “No, fuck—I meant I’m going to—get low as I can and drop you, I can’t land with you hanging off me. Roll with the fall. Got it?”

“Yes,” Ranboo choked out.

“Good. On the count of three. Three—”

Ranboo took a deep breath.

“—two—”

Dream’s grip loosened slightly.

“—one.”

Then for the third time that day, Ranboo was falling. He hit the dirt before his shriek of terror could burst from his throat and rolled on instinct, sloughing off the worst of the impact. His vision spun sky-grass-sky-dirt before finally settling on sky.

Ranboo just *laid* there for a moment, breathing. Holy guacamole, he was alive. Several parts of him were stinging something fierce and he’d definitely be very bruised tomorrow, but he was *alive*.

“RANBOO!” Ranboo turned his head to see Tubbo sprinting towards him, panic on his face. “Ranboo, are you okay?”

“I,” Ranboo wheezed, “am never sleeping again.”

An unflattering snort-laugh burst from Tubbo’s mouth. It soon devolved into half-angry, half-relieved sobbing, and Ranboo found himself being dragged into a strangling hug. “Fuck you, Ran, I thought you were going to *die*—after we went through all that trouble—chased you through half the server and woke everyone up—”

“I’m okay, I’m alive,” Ranboo promised, reaching up to pat him on the back. His head was still spinning from his near-death experience. He could hear his heartbeat pounding in his ears. Through his bleary vision, he saw Wilbur come to a stop several feet away, his eyes fixed on something past Ranboo’s shoulder. Ranboo followed his gaze.

“...Tommy?” Wilbur breathed.

Dream and Tommy were huddled together a ways away, watching the cluster of people gathered around Ranboo warily. At Wilbur’s utterance, Tommy tensed further and Dream flung up a wing in front of the younger avian, shielding him from the stares.

Wilbur drifted forward, his eyes wide with wonder. “You...have wings,” he said. “You have—that’s why—independence—you *both* have wings—”

“That did affect my decision to grant independence,” Dream agreed tersely. When Wilbur just kept staring, he tacked on a hesitant “Is this going to be a problem?”

“Wh—nonono! No, you both have wings, that’s—fine. That’s fine. Just—why did you—hide it?”

“Wings are dangerous. People with wings are targeted.”

“You didn’t trust me?” The genuine hurt in Wilbur’s voice was directed not at Dream, but Tommy instead. When Tubbo’s arms tightened around Ranboo, Ranboo knew Tubbo felt similarly hurt. “Your wings—they came in right before the Independence War, didn’t they? That’s when you first started wearing the hoodie. You’ve been hiding it for more than a *year*.”

Dream’s expression grew cold, likely in preparation for whatever defensive reply he was about to deliver—only for Tommy to smack his wing aside with a huff of “Get your feathers out of my face, dickhead.” When Dream sent him a *look*, he rolled his eyes. “Lay off the protective act, I’ll be fine.”

He turned to Wilbur—and Tubbo by extension. His wings drooped, as though weighed down with guilt.

“Look, I didn’t—it’s not that I don’t trust you, I just...we were all busy with getting independence and I didn’t want to stress you all out, and then after independence there were the elections and running L’Manberg and—and—the more people that knew, the bigger the chance someone I didn’t want to know might find out and—yeah.”

“I was helping him hide it,” Ranboo blurted. “I, uh, found out by accident.”

Before Tubbo or Wilbur could respond to that, Tommy hurried onwards. “Listen, I’m—I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to hurt you, I just didn’t—”

He trailed off as Tubbo pulled away from Ranboo, pushed himself to his feet, and trudged over to him. Ranboo, still sitting on the ground, found himself in a momentary panic as he debated whether or not he’d need to protect Tommy. That panic proved unfounded, however, when Tubbo simply asked, “Can you take people flying?”

“Uh—yeah? I guess? As long as they don’t flail around like Ranboo did—”

“Take me flying,” Tubbo demanded. Then he hastily amended, “not right now. Later.”

It was an indirect peace offering—one Tommy accepted with a tip of his head and a wry, “Whatever you say, Tubso.”

A quiet but fervent “*fuck*” interrupted the heartwarming moment. Heads turned towards the culprit. “Wilbur?” Tommy called. “Something wrong?”

“You’re an avian,” Wilbur said weakly. “You’re an avian and I never realized. Phil is going to *kill* me.”

When later pressed, neither Tommy nor Dream would explain why Wilbur’s words made them laugh for two minutes straight.

**224.** *the adventures of dreaxter, pt. 12* ([see previous parts of this loop here](#))

**CW:** *references to past torture and abuse, heavily flawed justice system*

<TommyInnit> *ill keep him away from the mainland for now*

<TommyInnit> *plan the trial and whatever*

<GeorgeNotFound> *Does dream want a public trial? And does he plan to testify?*

<TommyInnit> *second one yes*

<TommyInnit> *he went all glitchy when i mentioned public trial but also said yes so that's a maybe*

<TommyInnit> *tell me what date you choose so i know when I can drag him back*

George sent a terse acknowledgment and turned off his communicator. He looked up at the other three in the room. “Dream—Dreaxter wants to testify in the trial.”

“So that’s three witnesses,” Antfrost concluded. “Me, Bad, Dream. Are...either of you going to testify?”

George and Sapnap exchanged looks. “...I’ll make a list of the, the—injuries,” Sapnap said hoarsely. “George—”

“I’ll present it with the camera footage,” George agreed to the unsaid request. Sapnap’s shoulders sagged with relief.

“Okay,” Bad said, conspicuously not looking at the two of them. “And...are we making this public?”

“We should,” Antfrost said. “We were all, uh, affiliated with Dream at some point. If we don’t want people trying to help Quackity or Sam, we need to hold a public trial so they can see the evidence for themselves. If it’s a closed-doors trial, people might think it’s a ploy for us to get revenge on Sam and Quackity for killing Dream.”

“But they didn’t just kill Dream,” Sapnap butted in, eyes flaring. “They *tortured*—”

“Yes, but no one’s going to believe it or understand how—how *bad* it was until they see the evidence themselves. And you remember how—” Antfrost cut himself off, winced, and visibly took a moment to rephrase his words. “Dream’s not...well-liked on the server. If people don’t understand how bad it was, they might say that he—well. That he deserved it.”

“The ghost already agreed to a public trial,” George cut in. He left out the fact that Dreaxter had momentarily reverted to his more disturbing form when asked. The trial *had* to be public if they wanted to ensure that Sam and Quackity *properly* paid for what they did. If Dreaxter’s comfort had to be sacrificed for a moment that he likely wouldn’t remember later, then so be it.

“So we’re all in agreement about making the trial public?” Bad asked. Antfrost and George inclined their heads in agreement. Sapnap followed suit, albeit more reluctantly. Bad took in their reactions, then took a deep breath and straightened. “Okay. Fair and public trial it is.”

George cleared his throat. "Fair trial?"

"Fair trial," Bad confirmed.

George nodded. "Alright. Sapnap, get out."

Sapnap stared at him. George raised his chin and stared right back.

"You're too emotionally invested," he said. "If we want this to be a 'fair' trial, we can't have you here."

"We *want* Sam and Quackity to *pay*," Sapnap snapped.

"And they won't if we don't do this properly. You really think nobody's going to be scrutinizing our nonexistent justice system after this? If we screw this up, people might use what happened to *Dream* in prison as an argument to let Sam and Quackity go."

Sapnap reeled back, the flames licking at the edges of his hair extinguished alongside the frustration blazing in his eyes. Woodenly, he pivoted around and stalked out of the room.

"That was...harsh," Antfrost said quietly.

George's expression remained blank, but it was now cast with an edge of exhaustion. "He's like the ghost. Too emotionally involved. He can't be part of the planning process, especially if he's going to—attend the trial. He would've been too concerned with making Dreaxter feel comfortable."

"...But we *should* make sure he feels safe," Bad pointed out.

"Why? He won't remember it if he doesn't."

Antfrost and Bad exchanged *looks*.

"He's not Dream," George said flatly. "He said so himself. It's not his murder trial. He's just a witness."

"George—"

"Are we going to get on with planning or not?"

Bad once again exchanged *looks* with Antfrost, but wisely dropped the subject. "If we're going for a fair trial," he said, "we need impartial judges."

"People who aren't really close to anyone involved," Antfrost muttered. "Eret, maybe. Foolish? No, he's friends with Sam. Purpled. Puffy? Niki? Connor?"

Bad was already shaking his head. "I don't think Connor or Niki are too connected with any of the people involved, but Puffy is...she was close to Dream."



“And Hannah and Ponk are close to Sam.” George huffed. “Do we really need more than four people on the jury?”

“I mean, we’re not even including lawyers,” Bad pointed out. “There aren’t any set rules here. Four is probably enough.”

And so it was decided. They'd put Quackity and Sam on trial. Eret, Purpled, Niki, and Connor would be asked to act as a jury of sorts. They'd call up people to present evidence of their crimes, then give Quackity and Sam a chance to defend themselves. And then they'd let the jury decide what would happen to them.

"I'll announce the trial date," George said flatly. "Antfrost, Bad—check with the jurors and see if they'll be okay with acting as the jury."

"...Shouldn't we wait until after they've responded for you to announce the trial?"

"If they say no, the audience can decide." George's smile was sharp and devoid of humor. "The court of public opinion won't be on their side after this."

---

### ***World Chat***

*<GeorgeNotFound> I have an announcement.*

*<GeorgeNotFound> This Friday at 13:00, Sam and Quackity will be put on trial for criminal violation of human rights concerning Dream.*

*<GeorgeNotFound> Anyone who wishes to attend, go to the courthouse where TommyInnit was tried before his exile. The sentence will be decided by an impartial jury.*

*<GeorgeNotFound> We ask that you withhold any attempts to interfere with the trial before you see all of the evidence.*

---

The trial was not a fun time for anyone.

Quackity and Sam had been placed in temporary “cells” to make sure they wouldn’t try to escape or hurt someone else during the hearing. Quackity had spat and raged and paced behind the bars, but Sam had just—sat there, slumped, like a discarded doll.

All four jury members looked supremely uncomfortable to be there. Niki kept shifting in her seat. Eret’s brows were furrowed behind his sunglasses. Connor was attempting to become

one with his chair. Purpled was trying to look bored, but his tense jaw and crossed arms belied his unease. The audience, for their part, were armed to the teeth and taut as a bowstring. Most sat at the edges of their seats, ready to leap up at the slightest provocation.

"Order," Eret called, taking over as the de facto lead juror. A hush fell over the crowd. The monarch cleared his throat. "As you all know, Quackity and Sam are being accused of... human rights' violations."

"Which is *bullshit*," Quackity called. "You *all* agreed to locking Dream up—"

"Wrongfully imprisoning Dream is *not* what you're being accused of," Eret said. "Neither are you being tried for allegedly killing Dream. We all know what the stance on killing in this server is."

Which was to say, killing was usually dealt with via vigilante justice.

"Antfrost—if you could please outline your accusations for the court..."

Antfrost stepped up. "We're accusing Quackity of committing torture for a sustained period of time and inhumane treatment of another player. We're also accusing Sam of inhumane treatment...and of being an accomplice to Quackity."

Eret nodded. "And you have evidence?"

"Witness testimony from two prison guards—myself and Bad—as well as Dreaxter, Dream's ghost. We also have...video footage. From inside the cell. And an autopsy report."

"Alright. You may present your evidence."

Bad stood. "If I could, I'd like to give a joint testimony with Antfrost?"

"Go ahead."

Once the presentation of evidence began, the tension in the room slid into outright horror. Dream *tried* to keep his "creepy ghost shenanigans" to a minimum, but he still found green dripping from his fingers as the jurors questioned Bad and Antfrost about the screams they'd heard and their encounters with Quackity in the prison. Sapnap's monotone recitation of the injuries found on Dream's corpse and the suspected cause of death had him phasing halfway through the bench. When George presented the damning cell camera footage, Dream simply gave up. He knew his limits. So he pasted a vacant expression on his face, turned, and drifted through the wall. The last thing he heard was a surprised "Dream—?" and Tommy saying "I'll go after him," and then he was standing out in the sunlight.

"Hey," Tommy said as he rounded the corner two minutes later, coming to a stop a few feet away from Dream. "You good?"

Dream shook his head. "I couldn't—I didn't know they had the—footage. I—I don't want to see it. I *can't* see it."

“Okay,” Tommy said, easily accepting the jumbled near-nonsense that had just come out of Dream’s mouth. He pulled out his communicator. “I’ll tell ‘em I don’t think it’s a good idea to bring you in while the footage is playing.”

A wave of relief swept through Dream. “Thank you.”

They sat in companionable silence for the better part of fifteen minutes before Tommy’s communicator buzzed. He gave it a look-over before turning to Dream. “Ready to head back in?”

“Mm,” Dream agreed reluctantly, rising from where he’d been staring at a nice patch of flowers. He glanced down to make sure his hands were stained with glitter instead of green before he moved towards the entrance. Tommy fell into step at his left shoulder in silent support.

They returned to a courtroom quite different from the one they had left. Something had *shifted* in the air—the anger and disbelief previously directed towards the prosecutors was now overshadowed with mute horror. Dream tried not to shudder under the many gazes pinned on him as he drifted back towards his seat.

Eret cleared his throat. "Dream—sorry, Dreaxter, you can go to the witness stand. It's your turn."

Well. Shit. Just when he’d calmed down, too.

With one last glance at Tommy for moral support, he made for the witness stand. Fuck. He didn’t want to do this. Surely the existing evidence was enough? He’d thought he’d want to confront them, but—

“Do you remember how you died, Dreaxter?” Eret asked neutrally. His eyes were kind behind his sunglasses. Dream felt his shoulders relax.

“Um,” he began, “*I don’t remember a lot? I just, er, know I’m dead because.*” He gestured down at himself.

Purpled sat forward in his seat. “You don’t remember ‘a lot’. So you do remember *something*.”

“*It was cold,*” was all Dream said.

“Makes sense with the blood loss,” the mercenary grunted. Then he sighed and gestured at Dream. “Why are we even putting him on the witness stand? The other stuff’s enough proof, isn’t it?”

“Hey, they should at least get a chance to defend themselves.” Connor shrugged one shoulder. “Right to face your accusers and all that. Quackity, Sam, do you—er—have anything to say?”

Sam didn’t raise his head. Quackity, however, stalked forward and planted himself at the bars of his cell. “Look,” he said, and though his voice was suave and his expression sly, the tense

set of his shoulders revealed his anger. "I'm not a good person. I'd be the first to admit it. Yeah, what I did was pretty fucked up. But can you all really say Dream didn't deserve it?"

Half the courtroom recoiled, a knee-jerk reaction to such a blasé statement about the brutality they'd just witnessed. Quackity wrapped his hands around the bars and leaned forward, his diplomatic persona melting away as he zeroed in on Tubbo.

"You remember what he did. He screwed you over, Tubbo, you remember that? Manipulated you into exiling Tommy. He destroyed L'Manberg. He *laughed* when he did it." He turned to address the wider audience. "He stole your stuff, planned on using it to blackmail all of you so he could have you under control. He probably committed ten times the number of 'human rights violations' you're charging me with. You all were willing to *kill him* just a few months ago—and you *agreed* to his imprisonment. Sam and I?" Quackity spread his hands, half-lowering his eyelids and drawing his shoulders up in a shrug. "We were just doing our jobs."

Dream heard Tommy hiss through his teeth. The low hum of static crackled in his ears, accompanied by the low burn of sheer, unadulterated *rage*.

"You—" Sapnap snarled, stepping forward—only for George's hand to snap shut around his bicep and drag him back.

"The problem isn't that you killed him," the colorblind man said tersely. "The problem is that you *tortured* him."

"Why's everyone so torn up?" Quackity scoffed. "Yeah, he might've been our friend once. But the Dream we knew? He's been gone for a long time. The guy in the prison cell was a power-hungry monster. Look at the shit he pulled—I was doing all of you a favor."

And Dream—

—*snapped* .

He was distantly aware of the others in the courtroom lurching away from him, of the bruises blooming across his skin and the viscous green dripping from his fingers and the cracks splintering down his mask. He stalked towards Quackity, drawing his lips back in grim satisfaction as his torturer scrambled back, eyes wide. Fingers passed through his arm as someone—Tommy, probably—tried to yank him back.

"*Oh yes, I did some fucked up stuff,*" he hissed. "*My 'human rights violations' might've been just as bad as yours. But that doesn't fucking cancel out, Quackity. Did I deserve what you did?*" Quackity opened his mouth to speak, but Dream bulldozed over him. "*Don't pretend you did it out of justice or some shit—I was thrown into the prison and left to rot. That was justice. That was what the people agreed on. You decided to come in and torture me and tell me everyone endorsed it when they actually had no fucking clue what was going on in that prison.*"

"You killed Tommy—"

"*So why not kill me in return?*"

"The book! The revival book! You wouldn't give it to me—"

*"Ah yes, the book. You wanted knowledge. Power. Control. And torturing me gave you that, didn't it? You enjoyed it. Just like how I enjoyed making my pawns run in circles."*

Quackity bared his teeth. "I didn't *enjoy* it. It was necessary because you wouldn't give me the *damn book*."

*"Stop lying to yourself. You enjoyed it. You liked having someone else at your mercy. Just like me."*

"I didn't—"

*"You smiled, Quackity. I remember it."* Dream's lips stretched into an eerie smile. His voice changed, too, lightening into a tone that could *almost* be called cajoling—if it wasn't so terrifyingly *delighted*. *"C'mon, Dream. Just tell me about the book, and I won't have to hurt you anymore. No? Damn, looks like I'll have to pull another tooth. Hey, hold still—I might grab a bit of your tongue by accident."*

Quackity made a choked noise. "Th-that wasn't—"

Still smiling, Dream continued, *"Feel like talking now, Dream? No? Your mouth doesn't hurt that bad, come on. It's just a little blood, you can talk fine. Still a no? That's another tooth."*

"Fucking *End*," someone breathed from the audience box. Quackity was silent.

Dream's smile *twisted*. The manic light in his eyes settled into something sharper, *darker*. *"Everyone else hates you, Tommy,"* he crooned. *"But I don't. I'm your friend. I know what's best for you—so shut up and put your stuff in the hole."*

Tommy went rigid even as several eyes snapped to him. He'd known this was coming—had told Dream he was okay with it—but hearing it implied in front of over half the server made a part of him want to shrivel with shame.

*"Just listen to me, Tommy. You never listen. If you did, I wouldn't have to do this."* The smile dissolved from Dream's face, replaced with flat emptiness. *"Does that sound familiar to you, Quackity? Similar?"*

"Shut up," Quackity said.

*"No. You created me. You have to deal with me."* Dream took an unnecessary breath. *"Listen, Quackity—I don't care about what you did to me."* He paused. *"Okay, maybe I do care. A little. But I just can't fucking stand that you think you were doing everyone else a favor."*

"I was—"

*"You told me Sapnap and George approved of what you were doing—did you really believe that? No, you didn't. Because you didn't tell them. You kept it a secret."*

"That was—it wasn't—" This time, Quackity was the one who cut himself off. For the first time since the trial had begun, he seemed... *scared*.

Dream bared his viridian-stained teeth. *"You weren't avenging anyone, Quackity. You were enjoying a power trip—just like every other manipulative bastard on this Prime-forsaken server. Just like me."*

Quackity didn't seem to know how to reply, but Dream didn't wait for one—he rounded on Sam. *"And you, I TRUSTED YOU!"* he howled at the creeper hybrid, who reared back, eyes wide with alarm. *"Even if you didn't consider us friends anymore, I thought you'd at least remember basic human decency! We both knew the prison was unfinished when you threw me in, I—I didn't even have a bed to sleep on, all I had to eat were raw potatoes and then you—you let Quackity—do this to me!"*

He wasn't quite sure what he looked like anymore—but it definitely wasn't pretty. Dream could feel himself coming undone at the edges, his rage warping him into some grotesque, bleeding wreck of a creature. This was the problem with staying a ghost—even with their memories intact, their nature tended to overrule any emotional control they had in life. The veil of death left them viewing the world through a distant film of apathy—but when that film broke, it broke *hard*. And with ghosts' outward appearances being so reliant on their self-image...their fury could quite literally turn them into monsters.

A familiar voice reached through the burning fog. "Oi, Dream. Dreaxter."

*Tommy?*

"Yeah, it's me. You need to chill the fuck out. You're scaring the shit out of everyone."

*What?*

"You're doing the ghost shit again. Calm down."

*I can't. They hurt me.*

A sigh. "Come back, big D. Let go of it. Everything's gonna be alright, I promise."

The beloathed nickname coaxed Dream out of the haze. He grew more cognizant of his form—but it was just that, *cognizance*, and the inferno raging inside of him prevented him from regathering himself. Tommy must've recognized the shift in awareness, though, because he sighed, stepped forward—and upended a jar of homemade glitter upon Dream's head.

The sheer *incongruity* of the action jolted Dream straight out of his spiraling anger. He blinked at the sparkling particles now coating his eyelashes.

"*Huh?*" was all he managed to say.

"Glitter," Tommy said gravely.

"*Glitter,*" Dream echoed incredulously. But despite the disbelief in his voice, he could feel himself visibly coalescing back into his customary form, his tattered prisoner garb rapidly

repairing itself as though reversed in time. The sheer shock of Tommy's actions had effectively doused the fire raging inside of him, leaving the aching relief of catharsis behind.

Tommy's sharp stare roved over him. "You calm now?"

"I..." Dream flexed his hands. There was glitter under his formerly-missing fingernails. "...*Yes. I'm. Calm.*"

Tommy acknowledged his words with a nod and stepped back, leaving Dream once again alone at the center of the courtroom. The ghost took a moment to ground himself, closing up wounds and fixing up cracks until he looked just like he had when he was still an unharmed prisoner in Pandora's Vault. He didn't try to wrangle his orange jumpsuit into a green hoodie. He wanted to see the conclusion as *Dream*, not his amnesiac ghost.

When he was ready to face the music, he opened his eyes.

Sam stared back at him through the bars of his cell, eyes wide and face pale. Quackity, for his part, had retreated all the way to the back of his cell and was watching Dream with the wildness of a hunted thing. The dead man studied his two murderers for one stretching moment—then turned to the jury.

"*I'm sorry for losing control like that,*" he rasped. His gaze slid to the audience, most of whom were half-out of their seats with weapons in their hands. "*That was. Unprofessional.*"

Eret was the first to speak. "Are you...Dream?"

Dream's smile was more of a grimace. "*I guess. When a ghost gets too emotional, the unpleasant parts of us get dragged back.*"

"That other ghost—Wilbur," Connor said. "He's never done anything like this—I don't think he has, right?"

It wasn't quite an accusation, but Dream felt the gazes on him intensify, looking for cracks in his facade. An unspoken question hung over the courtroom—was he lying? Was Dreaxter indeed Dream pretending to be an amnesiac just to avoid consequences?

Dream rearranged his expression into a sneer, sending up a mental apology to Ghostbur. "*Wilbur's ghost runs away from any situation that can make him emotional. My ghost apparently wants to face them head-on, so—*" he spread his hands mockingly, "*—here I am. At your service.*"

The jury exchanged *looks*, unsure of how to proceed. Eret was the one to finally speak. "Are there...any other statements or testimonies you would like to provide?"

"*No. I've said everything I wanted to say. Except—*" Dream glanced over at the two defendants, then back to the jury. "*When you sentence them...don't give them a sentence like mine. It's not rehabilitation, it's a slower execution.*"

Eret nodded sharply. "Thank you, Dream. If that's all, you may return to your seat."

Dream drifted over to Tommy, feeling like a rowboat in stormy waters. The ever-present weight of resentment in his chest was—not gone, but lightened, and he felt unmoored without it. It was a...good feeling. Cathartic. But so, so terrifying at the same time—because that rage had kept him grounded, and without it, he felt as though he'd lost a fundamental part of himself.

He'd thought he'd learned to let go during the loops. Turns out, he'd just been using humor to hide how much pain and anger he'd held onto.

“Better?” Tommy asked him quietly. Dream nodded. He could feel George and Sapnap's stares burning holes into the side of his head, but he didn't look over. He wasn't ready for that conversation yet.

The rest of the trial passed by in a haze. Dream caught bits and pieces—the jury declaring the defendants clearly guilty on the basis of evidence, then moving on to decide the sentence; Eret asking for opinions from the audience, roping them into the discussion; The silence from Sam and Quackity's corner of the courtroom; Tommy subtly fending off any curious glances or questions directed towards Dream. And Dream barely noticed any of it—he was too preoccupied with putting himself back in order.

A gentle nudge to his shoulder drew him out of his daze. A hush had fallen over the courtroom. “They're announcing the final decision,” Tommy muttered in his ear. In the jury box, Eret rose to his feet.

“Quackity.” The monarch took a deep breath. “The court finds you guilty of excessive, unnecessarily inhumane treatment of a prisoner. Sam, the court finds you guilty as an accomplice.

“Taking into consideration the request of your...victim, and at the suggestion of the court, you are sentenced to three years of house arrest—provided you remain on good behavior—and biweekly, *mandatory* therapy sessions, which Puffy has volunteered to provide.”

An unnameable feeling bloomed in Dream's chest. It wasn't *relief*, not quite, but he felt—lighter. It was healing, in a way, to see a trial ending in an outcome that was supposed to help the defendants become *better*. And as much as he feared Quackity and Sam—*hated* them, even—he knew they'd once been good men. The circumstances they now lived in had twisted them into something unrecognizable, but maybe this could help.

Eret continued. “Are there any objections to this decision from the jury, prosecution, or the audience?”

Looking up, Dream scanned the courtroom—coming to a stop on Sapnap and George, who he'd honestly expected to fight for a harsher sentence. George's face was about as expressive as a stone wall. Sapnap...looked troubled, but his eyes weren't glowing any more than usual and he seemed more pensive than frustrated.

“Very well, then,” Eret said. “Antfrost, Bad, George, and Sapnap will be in charge of enforcing the sentence. Please explain the system you plan to use and your expectations to



Sam and Quackity *before* you implement it, and adhere to it. If you abuse your power or exercise unnecessary cruelty, you will face consequences. Do you understand?"

"We do," said Bad.

"Good. Now if there's nothing else...?" When nobody spoke up, Eret nodded. "Alright. Court adjourned."

All the tension in Dream's body melted away. He slumped back against the hard wooden bench, taking in an unneeded breath. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw Sapnap and George stand—but before they could approach, Tommy intercepted them. Dream couldn't hear what the ensuing sharp, hissed conversation was about, but it ended with George and Sapnap backing off and turning their attention towards Quackity and Sam's cells. Tommy sat back down beside Dream and said nothing.

Frankly, Dream was thankful for it. His mind was already a mess without the added stress of an emotional conversation.

This entire loop had been a whirlwind. To know that there was a very real possibility of Quackity going too far and killing him—it was frightening. But at the same time, this entire experience had been...liberating. It had given him a chance to free the long-suppressed resentment curdling within him. Before, he couldn't express that anger without consequences—whether they be physical when he was in the Vault, or mental, if he went too far and took it out on an innocent version of his jailers. But now, he'd been allowed to speak to his heart's content without fear of retaliation and with Tommy to hold him accountable.

It was over. Quackity and Sam would face justice for what they'd done. Yes, this wouldn't last—but Dream had finally been allowed to say what he'd *needed* to say. He no longer had to harbor the bottled-up fury that had burned within him for so long. Now, he could begin to heal.

Dream closed his eyes and finally, *finally*, let go.

225.

***TW: Suicide (sort of)***

"Holy shit."

"Yeah."

"*Holy shit.*"

"You're telling me that someone fuckin' *nuked* us?"

"Yes."

Dream took a deep breath. “So we died, you tried to send Tommy and—Tubbo back in time, but you grabbed me instead of Tubbo. Then you tried to fix your mistake, and ended up *breaking our timeline*—which is why we’re all now stuck in a time loop.”

“That’s most of it,” Future-Karl agreed. “Just—one more thing. I’m in a different loop. Not yours.”

He received twin blank stares.

Future-Karl sighed. “Th-think of it like this. I made one path to send you back, then added another one when I tried to send myself back with you. The two of y-you went into the main timeline like you were supposed to...but I’m stuck on the path I made. Which means I’m not g-going to show up at this t-time every loop—just whenever my loop overlaps with the main timeline. Does that make sense?”

“Sort of?” Tommy made a face. “Fuck, Karl, what the fuck, how the fuck—”

The older Karl laughed, then cut himself off with a wince. “I know. But—it also means that I won’t remember what happened here. You’re still travelling...*forward*. I’m—my loop is—an offshoot of the timeline, but because I messed it up, it’s...closed. It circles back in on itself—so each time it restarts, I forget.”

“We’re going to have to explain all of this again,” Dream realized. “And that’s if we can even find you first.”

“Yes.”

“*Fuck.*”

Future-Karl snorted, then made a face and hunched slightly over his ribs. “Look, that’s—not a big concern. Don’t look at me like that. I’m...not saying it’s n-not fixable. Just that it’ll take longer. More work.”

Both loopers straightened at that. “So you *can* fix it?” Tommy demanded.

“I don’t...have enough power...to fix...” Future-Karl gestured vaguely, a motion encompassing the entirety of the timeline. He tilted his head towards Present-Karl, who seemed more agitated by the minute. “Younger-me doesn’t...have enough power *or* knowledge. Too long to learn. So. Another plan. We’ll tr-transfer magic across loops.”

If Present-Karl had been pale before, he was now white as a sheet. “You’re going to *give them magic*?”

“Woah woah woah,” Tommy interrupted, his wide eyes belying the sharpness of his tone. “The fuck do you mean *give us magic*? Are you going to turn us into—aliens or—”

“*Void*, no.” Present-Karl looked horrified. “I think what he wants is—to use the two of you to, um, help him build up magic across the loops. You know how we’re made up of memories? Our magic is, um, pretty much *memories*. We *are* made up of magic. So what he wants to do is—well—your time travel is mental, so—”

“I c-can give you my magic—you can carry it across loops,” Future-Karl said bluntly.

Present-Karl nodded. “And then—assuming other versions of him give their magic to you too —”

“It’ll build up enough for him to take it back and fix the loop,” Dream breathed. “And that—that’ll really work? You can fix it?”

Future-Karl nodded. Present-Karl echoed the motion more hesitantly, but that was all the confirmation the duo needed.

Dream stepped forward and grabbed Tommy’s arm just as the younger looper staggered. Tommy all but collapsed against him, his breathing quickening with something between panic and disbelief. Present-Karl jerked as though to reach out, but Dream waved him off.

“We’re getting out?” Tommy croaked. “There’s really—we might get out?”

Guilt twisted Future-Karl’s face. “Yes,” he confirmed. “I can end the loops. As long as—” he coughed and spat to the side, then soldiered on. “As long as you’re okay with being used as—as a *battery*. If there was another way—”

“Will your magic affect us?” Dream asked, his eyes steely. “If we carry it, will we experience your memories?”

“No, it’s—”

“Then yes.” Future-Karl visibly balked at his quick acceptance, but Dream raised his chin and stood his ground. “We’ve been in this loop for *centuries*, Karl. We trust you. If you say this’ll get us out of it, and the magic won’t have any lasting consequences, then *we’re fucking doing it*.”

“But—” Present-Karl spoke up. He was staring at Future-Karl. “You barely have enough power to keep yourself together right now. If you give them the rest—”

“I don’t have enough to keep myself together for long either way—”

“I can give you some—”

“—and it would be a waste. *Look* at the timeline.”

Present-Karl’s eyes flashed violet. The blood drained from his face.

“I don’t have *time*.” Future-Karl pulled in a gust of air through his teeth. It audibly rattled. “I’m going either way. Don’t waste our magic.”

Present-Karl looked sick. “Is it because of me? Because I’m here, you can’t—”

“No duplicates.” Future-Karl’s wry smile was closer to a grimace. “Not your fault.” He turned his attention on the other two loopers, who up until now had been watching their conversation with wide eyes. “Y-you’re sure you’re okay with...with the plan?”

Tommy spoke for both of them. "...You're...going to *die* if you do this?"

"We need to fix this," Future-Karl pointed out. "And it's a closed loop. I'll come back. No memories."

Dream and Tommy exchanged looks.

"*I won't remember,*" Future-Karl insisted. He flipped his hands so they were lying palms-up—an invitation. "C'mere. Not much time."

Dream visibly swallowed an argument and exchanged grim looks with Tommy. It was true that the repeated deaths hypothetically wouldn't affect Karl, but—it still felt *wrong*.

Future-Karl made an impatient noise. "*Hurry.*"

Hesitantly, Dream and Tommy approached. Future-Karl grabbed their hands and shut his eyes. His form seemed to *shimmer*, golden light eating away at the edges of the glow like a flame against parchment. The other two loopers flinched in tandem as an odd buzz built up in the back of their skulls. It pitched higher—*higher*—before snapping like a rubber band.

And then the lightshow was over. Dream and Tommy stumbled back, Future-Karl's hands slipping from their own. The tempus exhaled, an ironic smile pulling at his lips. "See you... next time," he croaked.

And then he was gone.

An *awful* sort of silence followed as the three remaining time travelers stared in mute shock at the corpse, feeling vaguely like they'd just gone through the eye of a hurricane.

"What..." Tommy was the first to break the silence. "What the fuck just happened? He's—he just—he gave us his—*magic*—and now he's just—*dead*?"

"It's not permanent," Present-Karl—now the *only* Karl—reminded them. He looked shaken, but the numerous bombs that had been dropped on him in rapid succession had triggered his 'duty first, panic after' reflex. "Er. That's what he said. You said you've seen the aftermath of..." he gestured at the corpse, "...before, right?"

He had a point. Dream and Tommy were all too familiar with how a time loop devalued death—but it didn't make *seeing* it any easier.

Karl cleared his throat. "Do either of you...feel any different?"

Neither looper called him out on the obvious distraction. "No," Tommy muttered, tearing his gaze away from the corpse. "There was a weird—*fizzy* feeling in my bones when he was giving it to us, but otherwise no."

Dream hummed in agreement. He was still staring at the body.

"Good. That's...good." Karl's eyes flashed violet again. "You don't have a lot right now, though—you shouldn't feel anything when you get more either, but if that changes—"

"Yeah, we'll tell you. One of you." Tommy took a deep breath. "*Fuck*, this is confusing."

The laugh Karl let out was high-pitched and just a tad unhinged. This, at least, pulled Dream from his stupor. He blinked at the tempus, bewildered.

"Sorry. That." Karl shook his head. "You—the two of you know what to do when you loop back, right?"

"Find future-you and get him to give us his magic?" Tommy guessed.

"Yeah. Just—one thing—you said it's not guaranteed that you run into him every loop. And when you do, he'll be giving you only a little bit at a time. It'll take a *really long time*."

Tommy grimaced. "Yeah. We know."

"No, I mean—*really long*. Possibly centuries."

This time, it was Dream that spoke. "What are you trying to say, Karl?"

"I should give you my magic too." Karl winced at the look on their faces. "Not enough to kill me! Just all the extra I have so far. There's—a lot more, and it'll speed things up." He swallowed. "It's...it's not like I'll get free from the Inbetween anytime soon, and fixing the timeline is more important, so..."

He held his hands out in silent offering.

Tommy exhaled shakily. "Right. *More important*."

He reached out to take Karl's hand, only to freeze when he caught sight of his ash-stained fingers. Karl took in a sharp breath and stepped back, hands dropping back to his sides as his rapidly-building anxiety spiked.

They stood, a frozen tableau, for several stretching seconds. Then Dream took ahold of Tommy's arm and tugged him back a step.

"Maybe...not today," he said.

Logically, it was unwise. They didn't know when the loop would restart. But...they just couldn't. Not so soon after the shock they'd all received.

Karl nodded. "Okay. *Okay*. Yeah. Um. In that case." He looked down at the body. "...I need to get rid of this."

"Do you...want help?"

"Only if you *want* to help. It shouldn't be too hard to burn this on my own—"

Dream straightened. "Burn?"

Karl sighed. "It's tradition to burn the body if a tempus dies in physical form. It's—symbolic, I guess, of releasing our souls as—light. Or energy."

"Then why did you bury him?"

Karl stared at them. "Huh?"

"The you in another loop," Dream clarified. "We found the body. You buried it."

The tempus winced. "Ah, well. I think—future-me might've asked to be buried. I, uh, well. Since I got trapped here, I've been thinking—I'd rather be buried when I died. No coffin, just—dirt. I'd give back to the earth, that way. And..." he worried his lip, then admitted, "I wanted my friends to find closure if something ever happened to me. Being cremated was a little too close to just—up and disappearing into thin air."

And if there was one thing Karl feared most, it was disappearing without a trace. That was what the Inbetween would do to him. At least with a physical body left behind, part of him would stay with the people he loved (morbid as that was).

"Or maybe the other me just didn't want a smoke trail to attract attention," Karl added after a moment of thoughtful silence. "That makes sense. Pyres smoke a lot, could have attracted the wrong kind of attention."

Tommy pressed his face into his hands, took a deep breath, and said, "What the *fuck*, Karl."

Karl coughed out something between a laugh and a sharp exhale. "Um. I guess I should bury him, then. I'll just—" he knelt, grasped the body by the arm, and hauled it over his shoulder. Before he could begin the arduous process of hauling it up the ladder, however, Dream took ahold of the body's legs and hoisted them up. Karl blinked at him.

"I'll help," Dream said quietly.

"You really don't have to," Karl began. "It's not—"

Tommy moved forward. "*We* 'll help."

Karl stared at the two of them for a long moment before sighing and nodding to the ladder situated in the corner. "There's a clearing above this room, we can bury him there. The hard part is getting his body up the ladder—"

"We can do that."

"Oh. Okay. I'll just—um—get started on the grave, then."

He handed the body over to Dream and Tommy, then clambered unsteadily up the ladder. The trapdoor shut behind him. Dream, Tommy, and the corpse were left alone in the room.

"This is fucked up," said Tommy.

“It is,” Dream agreed. He looked to the ladder, looked down at the corpse, and sighed.  
“Alright, let’s go help Karl hide a body.”

If Tommy’s responding snort-laugh was somewhat hysterical, Dream was kind enough not to mention it.

## Chapter End Notes

heads up: the final chapter count for this fic will be around 50.

FANART :D

celery4miku made this [amazing gacha video](#)!! Go check it out :D

Sky Faiyassu drew this [super cool art](#) of the glitter duo!! And also art of [them as ponies](#) (pegasi!glitterduo my beloved)

Monetty drew [this wonderful picture of ot!dream, taken moments before disaster](#).

honestly this is something ot!dream would do

This [beautiful drawing of tempus!karl](#) by chroma!! Look at those colors aaaaa

Tom also drew [some glitter duo](#)!! Their style is so interesting hsdjflk

Emetha\_sucks [perfectly encapsulated the chaos that is this fic](#) (;v; )

Thighz made [this](#). Be afraid.

### **Loop Notes**

**221.** Puffy had a beginner crochet kit. This is how Dream began crocheting as a therapeutic activity.

**222.** Out of curiosity, Tommy did eventually try possessing a chair. Many people reported sightings of a floating, talking chair later that day. On a possibly related note, Puffy saw a notable increase in her number of therapy clients.

**223.** Dream and Tommy were competing to see who could hide their ginormous wings the longest. Then when Tommy got caught by Ranboo, they decided to see how long they could go on for. After the final events of 223, Dream spends much time explaining to Enderboo that it is not okay to investigate the newest craters on the server without taking someone else along, because he might wake up and Awake Ranboo can’t teleport on command. Enderboo reluctantly agrees to take a chaperone with him the next time he wants to wander around the server when Ranboo’s asleep—and this is how Tubbo ends up befriending the benevolent sleep paralysis demon (?) that sometimes possesses his friend. They go on fun adventures together :D

**225.** Kaaaaaarl, stop traumatizing the kids!

# Chapter 46

## Chapter Notes

Hello wonderful, kind, endlessly patient people! I am so sorry for not updating for 4 months; the transition to college was not a smooth one  
Here's my present to y'all this holiday season <3 hope you enjoy the chapter!

putting fanart here because I hit character limit in the chapter end note:

Fawn. Fawn you wonderful human being. They made so much good art and they convey so much emotion in the expressions. look at all of it!! ["time after time"](#) iterations of tommy throughout the loops!! And then some doodles of [sleeping glitterduo](#) and [remix!tommy fighting technoblade](#)! And then. So much epic remix!tommy content: [\[1\]](#) [\[2\]](#) [\[3\]](#) [\[4\]](#) [\[5\]](#)

[This hilarious animation](#) of multiple different loops by LegendaryBlueOranges!! Not me rewatching multiple times—

[That one loop where Tommy was an emotional support ender dragon](#), as depicted by Jordan :D

Avery [sang Ren's song "temporize"](#)!! your voice is so nice please take my kudos

Astral back at it again with these cute ot!karl doodles! [\[1\]](#) [\[2\]](#)

This really cool [Endless gacha animation meme](#) by M1kae!!! A very appropriate song choice...

### **Spotlighted Comments**

**RatsStoleMyBones:** Real friends are the ones who will help you bury your own body  
lmao

**FrOgGy\_hOpZ:** I'm sorry...when karl died I said "Skill issue tbh" 🥹👋

**SunshineValley:**

Tommy: "Kaaaaaaarl, that kills people!"

Karl: "Correction. It kills \*me\* :D"

**ell\_if\_i\_know :** karl my boy my lad my amigo my friend what in the everloving glittering fuck

**The Blade's Cape:** And so, the countdown to the end of "on temporizing" begins. Loop up fellow temporizers, we're in the Endgame now.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

## 226.

The air was rife with tension as Dream placed another card down. The two players locked eyes, then simultaneously glanced at the other's hand. For once, they were evenly matched.

"Draw two," Tommy said, delicately setting down a yellow card. For a moment, time stood still—because somehow, *impossibly*, Tommy was about to *beat Dream at Uno*. In all their



years of living, the younger looper had *never once* been able to beat the older at his game.

Dream looked down at his hand, looked up at Tommy, and—smirked?

“Uno reverse,” he said as he drew a card from his hand and placed it down. Tommy balked at the blatantly illegal move.

“That’s not how—” he began, only to be cut off when a figurative *wave* of pure power washed over him. Before his very eyes, the cards in his hand *multiplied*, increasing by two.

“What,” he said blankly.

“Uno reverse,” Dream said, which clarified nothing. Then he stood and trotted over to the window. It was pouring something fierce outside, but that didn’t stop Dream from prying the window open, sticking his uno reverse card into the rain, and declaring, “*Uno Reverse.*”

Tommy watched in utter disbelief as the rain slowed, stopped, and promptly began to reverse its direction. Muffled screeching could be heard in the distance—probably someone freaking out about the universe breaking.

“How the *fuck*,” said Tommy.

“I started a baking club with Niki and Tubbo and Ranboo,” said Dream, “and then we made a funny cake and gave it to XD.”

Tommy stared at him. “You. *Participated.* In threatening god with a reality-breaking cake.”

“At least Tubbo’s decorations stayed in the visible color spectrum this time!”

“*That doesn’t make it better!*”

---

Karl exhaled, the last of the odd golden glow fading away from his skin. He released his grip on their hands a moment later and stepped back.

“You good?” Tommy asked, eyeing him warily. Their first time witnessing a Karl’s lightshow had ended in tragedy, and even after repeating the process over twenty times, the lingering fear remained. “You’re not gonna—fuckin’ pass out on us, right?”

“I’m fine,” Karl muttered, blinking his eyes open. He took a moment to reorient himself, then looked up at the two of them. “Do *you* feel okay? No negative side effects? You don’t feel anything different?”

“No,” Dream assured him. “And if there were negative effects, I’d just reverse them.”

“...Reverse them?”

Tommy groaned. “You know how physics has just been breaking recently?”

An odd look passed over Karl’s face. “Like when I had to re-sort every book in my library because gravity reversed and messed up my bookshelves?”

There was a dangerous lilt in his voice. Dream winced. “In my defense—um—I’m sorry?”

“...*You* reversed gravity?”

Dream produced his uno reverse card from his inventory—only to nearly drop it when Karl hissed and recoiled like a cat with its tail stepped on. “*What is that?*” the tempus demanded, staring at the card like it had murdered his family.

Dream looked between the reality-bending artifact and the extraterrestrial being. “...Do you have something against uno cards?”

“That’s not just a card—that’s a *magical object*. A *powerful* one.”

“Oh. Well, I got it from XD. I’ve been using it to...reverse things.” Dream’s eyes widened. “Wait, what if I try to uno reverse the time loop—”

“Do *not*,” Karl said with the severity of a man clinging to sanity by his fingertips. “The timeline is already screwed up enough without you *uno reversing it out of existence*.”

Dream had to concede that that was a fair point, but—”Not even a little?”

“No, Dream.”

“Just a bit—”

“ I said *no*, Dream.”

“Just a tiny little bit, just to see what it does—”

“*No.* ”

Dream eventually agreed not to uno reverse the space-time continuum, but he sulked for the rest of the day.

---

“Uno reverse.”

“Dream, this is Monopoly.”

Dream blinked innocently and slid his card another inch forward. Punz, sitting across from him, calmly nudged the dice aside so he could lay his forehead against the board. Meanwhile,

Tommy—the third player in their game—was visibly restraining himself from attempting murder.

“No,” he snarled.

“Why not?”

“This *isn't* *Uno*.”

“So?”

“You landed on Boardwalk! Gimme fifty!”

“...No. I play my uno reverse.”

“I play a *knife to your face!*”

“Uno reverse!”

“OW F—”

In somewhat related news, Punz never played board games with Dream or Tommy again.

## 227. (inspired by LittleMissAlexandra)

Philza had been having a normal day. Keyword being “had”.

“What the fuck,” he muttered, poking one of his crows. It bore the treatment with rapidly-thinning patience. “Why do you have green feathers? Crows don’t have green feathers. Crows don’t have green feathers, right?”

The last question was directed towards the crow, who, fed up with his prodding, whacked him aside with a ruffled wing and took off. Philza just turned to another crow, who grumbled and snapped but ultimately allowed him to examine his feathers with an air of longsuffering.

The green had a distinctive pattern—almost like Philza’s outfit, if it had been simplified to its basic geometric forms and recreated with feathers. It would’ve been adorable, if not for the fact that Philza had *no idea how it had happened*. Could his crows just change the colors of their feathers at will now? Was that a thing?

“Are you fucking with me?” he asked the crows. Several of the younger ones, who were less capable of affecting the stoic no-I’m-definitely-not-messing-with-you-how-dare-you-accuse-me-of-such-atrocity mien the more experienced crows had mastered, ruffled their feathers and made the distinct squawking noise of a bird trying to choke down its laughter.

“How?” Philza demanded.

The only response he got was smug preening.

---

“Chat. Chat what the fuck.”

The flock of pigeons blinked up at him. Philza pressed his hands over his face, took a deep breath, then peeked through his fingers at the birds. They were still distinctly not-crow-shaped.

“You are Chat,” he said. “I’m not going crazy.”

The pigeons blinked in unison. It was frankly quite creepy.

“You *are*,” he insisted. “There’s no way you’re not.”

Still, the pigeons said nothing.

“...You little shits.”

One of the pigeons cooed at him. It sounded distinctly condescending.

Philza took another deep breath, turned, and calmly exited the premises.

---

“You change colors. Fine. You turn into another species of bird. *Fine*. But you. Are not. Fucking. DRAGONS.”

The dragon perched on his shoulder huffed a plume of smoke into his ear. He yelped and waved the hot air away, then glowered at the offending creature with the heat of ten suns. It laughed in his face, snatched his hat off his head, and promptly launched itself into the air. Philza barely got a swipe at it before it was hurtling off into the distance, stolen hat in its jaws.

“YOU BETTER GIVE THAT BACK,” he shouted after it.

The dragon did, in fact, give it back a few hours later...in pieces. And singed. Philza refused to speak to his Chat for the rest of the day.

---

“Phil. Phil, what.”

Phil had the look of a man in desperate need of coffee. “Don’t ask,” he rasped. “*Please.*”

Technoblade looked at the herd of llamas surrounding them and very loudly did not say anything. The llamas stared back, undaunted. One had begun chewing on the sleeve of Philza’s haori.

“Phil,” Technoblade said again.

“Don’t. Ask.”

Technoblade wisely heeded his friend’s request. Didn’t mean he reacted well when the llamas tried to eat his cape, though.

---

“No. Fuck this. Fuck you. I am going to *leave*, and when I come back you all better be crows again or so help me—”

One of the cows mooed at him. Philza glowered. “Don’t give me that, you little shit. I know this is your fault. Somehow. Fix it.”

With that, he spun on his heel and stomped away. The herd of cows did not follow him.

Once he was gone, Tommy poked his head out from where he’d been hiding between two cows. “He gone?” he asked, and received a round of affirmative mooing. “Pog. So I got another batch of potions in my inventory. How do you feel about rodents?”

Philza’s Chat looked at each other. One bovine smacked its lips in a distinctly non-herbivorous manner.

Tommy made a face. “No, not *eating* them—for fuck’s sake, do crows eat rodents? You do that?”

The cows looked at him and did not reply. Tommy shuddered.

“Oh-KAY! Moving the *fuck* away from *that* topic—Phil goes wood chopping regularly, apparently. Probably because of his pretentious-ass fireplace in his pretentious-ass cabin. Here’s the plan—”

---

“Is it just me, or are those squirrels...following us?”

Philza hefted his axe a little higher and glared firmly ahead. “Just you, mate. Squirrels all look the same, and there’s a lot of them in these woods.”

A chorus of distinctly offended chittering rose from the branches around them. Philza shoved a one-fingered salute in their general direction. “Fuck off!”

“Um,” said Ranboo.

Philza sighed, coming to a stop in the middle of a snowy clearing. “Okay, alright, yeah, they’re following us. I just didn’t want to acknowledge them because they’re all a bunch of —” he proceeded to recite an impressively creative arsenal of curses that elicited yet another round of offended rustling from the tree branches.

“*Um*,” Ranboo repeated more urgently. His impending mental crisis, however, was interrupted by the garbled groan of a zombie—more specifically, a baby zombie. The mob lurched from the shadows and made a beeline for them, its terrifying little claws outstretched. Ranboo barely had time to yelp out a warning before all hell broke loose. Furry grey-brown shapes *flooded* the clearing, converging in one unified mass on the baby zombie. Ranboo watched in horror as the horde of squirrels then proceeded to murder the corpse back to death.

“They don’t usually do that,” Philza assured him.

“Oh,” Ranboo said faintly. “Okay. That’s. Good to know.”

One of the squirrels howled victoriously. The rest joined in. Ranboo didn’t even *know* squirrels could howl.

“I’m just gonna. Go back home,” he told Philza. “I. Sorry. Just.”

“Go ahead, mate,” Philza said. He had an unholy glint in his eye that Ranboo was afraid to examine more closely. “I’ve got some...*business* to take care of here.”

Relieved, Ranboo promptly fled the scene.

## 228.

“So you know how you’re scared of potatoes?”

Dream didn’t look up from his sketchbook. “I’m not *scared* of potatoes. I just don’t like eating them.”

“You throw up every time you taste potatoes.”

“I *really* don’t like eating them.”

“You have issues, Dream.”

“Yup. Much worse issues than not being able to eat potatoes.”

“*Dream.*”

“Tommy.”

The couch creaked as Tommy flopped himself over the back. The hanging upper half of his body was now invading Dream’s personal space bubble. Dream determinedly ignored his antics and kept sketching.

“I can fix it,” said Tommy.

“What, my hatred for potatoes?”

“Hear me out. *Exposure therapy.*”

The *skrrr* of pencil against paper stopped. Dream narrowed his eyes at his notebook.

“Exposure...to potatoes?”

“Yeah. I was thinking—different potato dishes. Not the raw crap you eat all the time. Actual *cooked* potatoes with seasoning an’ shit.”

“Neither of us know potato recipes.”

“What if we turned it into a cooking competition?”

Dream slowly turned his head towards Tommy. “You want to turn exposure therapy...into a cooking competition?”

“Think about it,” said Tommy. “We put up some giant reward for whoever cooks the best potato dish. We don’t have to cook, someone gets paid, and maybe you’ll find a potato dish you actually like. It’s genius.”

“I threw up the last time I ate a potato,” Dream pointed out.

“Yeah, a *baked* potato without seasoning. C’mon, Dream, it’ll be *fun*. ”

“Stuffing everyone into the same building for three hours isn’t a good idea.”

“So we announce the contest via World Chat and set up a spot by the Prime Path. People can come in throughout the day and drop their food off. We can call in another judge or two so people don’t question our ob-jec-tivity or something.”

Dream sighed. He was warming up to the idea, but... “Who on the server would even agree to judge a cooking competition?”

Tommy smirked. “Oh, I know a guy.”

---

“I still don’t understand how Tommy got you to agree to this.”

“It’s simple,” Technoblade drawled. “I like potatoes. Judging this competition means I get to eat potatoes for free. It’s a win in my books.”

Dream conceded that that was a fairly logical point. Still, it was just...strange. “Do you even know *why* Tommy’s holding a potato cooking competition?”

“To fix your undyin’ hatred for potatoes? Yeah, he told me.”

“And you’re...not...”

“What, goin’ to ask about it?”

Dream nodded. Technoblade huffed.

“So you don’t like potatoes. Weird, yeah, but I’m not goin’ to be like, ‘*ohhh, nooo, you don’t like potatoes, must mean there’s somethin’ terribly wrong with you*’. Just means you haven’t actually eaten *good* potatoes before.” Technoblade paused. “...Not that I think this competition’s goin’ to result in good potatoes. I’ve got pretty low expectations, actually.”

“Do *you* know how to cook good potatoes?”

“C’mon, Dream, I used to farm potatoes. If anyone knows how to cook them, it’s me.”

Dream, having already heard the tale of the Great Skyblock Potato War from previous iterations of Technoblade, was indeed aware of Technoblade’s expertise in potatoes. “Then why didn’t you enter the competition?”

“I’m the most qualified,” Technoblade deadpanned. “The rest of these idiots wouldn’t be able to taste the difference between a red potato and a russet potato.”

Dream made a conscious decision not to inform Technoblade that he had no idea there were different kinds of potatoes. Instead, he said, “And what about the reward?”

Technoblade snorted. “I’m rich. I don’t need another Totem.”

“So you just...agreed.”

“Yup. Get comfortable, Dream, 'cause I have a hunch we’re goin’ to be eatin’ a *lot* of potatoes today.”

---



The first person through the door that morning was Philza. He brought mashed potatoes with him.

“Here,” the avian said, depositing two bowls on the table in front of them. “Mashed potatoes.”

“Really, Phil? Mashed potatoes?” Technoblade’s words were unimpressed, but he was grinning as he picked up his spoon.

“It’s a classic,” Phil defended, “and the only other thing I know how to make are baked potatoes.”

“Right, a classic. An *old* classic.”

“*Techno*—”

Dream peered at the bowl. It looked...pretty good, actually, creamy and sprinkled with green onions. He warily tried a bite—and almost instantly gagged. He hastily spit it into a napkin, then washed his mouth out with water.

“Sorry, sorry,” he said hoarsely. Philza looked at him, a faint frown tugging at the edges of his lips.

“I didn’t think it was *that* bad,” he said. Dream shook his head.

“No, no, it was okay. Just—the taste was—it was bringing up bad memories.”

Philza’s expression cleared. “No worries, mate. You good?”

“Yeah. I’m—yeah.”

Technoblade took a spoonful, chewed thoughtfully, then said, “You didn’t add enough salt.”

Philza sighed. “Yeah, I thought so. Didn’t want to make ‘em too salty, though. Chat told me not to.”

Technoblade made a face. “Did your crows taste test these?”

“Yeah?”

"Bruhhh."

"What?"

“Phil, birds are goin’ to have different preferences.”

“Oh,” said Philza, looking genuinely perplexed by the idea that bird and Player biology could be different. “...They are?”

"Yes, Phil."

"...Oh."

Technoblade sighed. "If it's all good with you, I'll take the rest back with me. I can add some salt on my own and finish it."

"Go ahead, mate. I don't really like mashed potatoes anyway."

---

Wilbur slammed his dish down in front of the two judges. "Chips," he declared proudly.

"Fries," Technoblade corrected. "Fried potato wedges, if we're bein' specific."

"Fuckin' Americans."

"Hey, show some respect for the judges." Technoblade bit into a potato wedge—and promptly winced as bitterness exploded across his tongue. He picked up a napkin, spat the potato out, and proceeded to drain his entire water cup.

"Wilbur," he said when he no longer felt like his tongue was dehydrating into a shriveled husk, "are you *tryin'* to give us sodium poisonin'?"

"Oh," said Dream, chewing on his potatoes with a look of faint consternation. "Is that why these are so bitter?"

"Phil said to make sure it was flavorful," Wilbur defended.

"So you dumped—what, a bucket of salt into it?"

"It was *half* a bucket at *most*."

"Hm," said Dream, and shoved another "chip" into his mouth.

"Why are you still eatin' that?" Technoblade asked.

"Ish nhot bad."

"It's eighty percent salt, Dream. It doesn't even taste like potatoes!"

"Eg'actly."

---

"Here," said Punz.

Dream looked at the plate. “Punz...”

“What?”

“Punz, this is just a raw potato.”

“I peeled it. And carved a smiley face on it.”

“It’s still raw.”

“...And?”

“Punz, this is a potato cooking competition. You have to *cook* the potato.”

“I did something to the potato. It counts.”

“Peeling something doesn’t count as cooking it, Punz.”

“Then don’t eat it. Let it be a happy potato. It’s smiling, see?”

Dream put his face in his hands and let out a long, long, sigh.

---

“Tommy, why are these potato chips sparkly?”

“For flavor,” said Tommy, looking at Technoblade like he was an idiot. “Why else?”

Dream peered at the chips. “Where did you learn to make these?”

Tommy pointed at Technoblade, who huffed. “I gave you the recipe on the condition that you’d follow it *exactly*,” he said. “Glitter isn’t part of the recipe.”

“It’s an *improvement*,” Tommy told him.

Dream picked up a chip and warily nibbled on it. Then he gnawed on it. Then he wedged it between his teeth and bit down as hard as he could. All he received for his efforts was edible glitter on his clothes, an aching jaw, and a perfectly intact potato chip.

Dream stared at the aforementioned potato chip like it had personally offended him. “Did you put Unbreaking on this or something?”

“No,” said Tommy. “I followed Techno’s recipe! Except for the glitter. The glitter’s all mine.”

“My recipe doesn’t create indestructible potato chips.” Technoblade attempted to snap his potato chip between his fingers and was rather unsuccessful. He sighed and tossed it over his shoulder. “Why’re you even participatin’? Aren’t you the one who’s organizin’ this event? Smells a bit like corruption.”

“Then just don’t pick me, idiot.”

“Fine. You’re disqualified.”

Tommy squawked. “Hey! You can’t just—”

“I’m a judge. I get disqualifyin’ power.”

“How dare you remove my *amazing* potato chips from your—”

Dream interrupted his rant by picking up his bowl and pushing it into Tommy’s hands.

“Tommy, these are going to break someone’s jaw.”

Tommy grumbled, but reluctantly turned and stalked away with the chips cradled in his arms.

“People these days have no appreciation for modern delicacies, I swear...”

---

Dream stared at Sapnap’s dish. Technoblade stared at Sapnap’s dish. Sapnap sheepishly edged away from his dish.

“I don’t think this is edible,” said Dream.

“I think it’s a little worse than ‘not edible’,” Technoblade said. “More like ‘dangerously lethal’.”

“I never said I could cook,” Sapnap defended.

“Oh no, you can cook. You can cook potatoes into radioactive waste. It’s honestly pretty impressive.”

The ‘food’ was beginning to eat through the ceramic plate. Technoblade procured a shovel from his inventory, scooped up the plates and hurled them, radioactive potatoes and all, into the grass several feet away.

Needless to say, Sapnap was disqualified from the competition for (accidentally) attempting to kill the judges.

---

“...I’m not really sure what I’m looking at,” said Technoblade.

“It’s my dish!”

“No, I mean—” Technoblade squinted at the...*thing* in front of him. Tubbo’s dish was a little bit difficult to comprehend. The longer Technoblade looked at it, the more his brain hurt. “—what is it...supposed to be?”

“Borromean potato rings!” Tubbo beamed widely and pushed his reality-breaking potatoes closer to the two judges. Technoblade edged back. Dream...Dream was lying faceup in the grass, staring dead-eyed at the sky.

“This was supposed to make me less scared of potatoes,” he whispered.

“No offense, but I don’t think that’s gonna work.” Technoblade poked at the non-euclidian potatoes with his fork, then recoiled when the metal prongs *warped*. “Yeah, uh, that’s gonna be a no from me. Points for presentation, though.”

Tubbo shrugged and, much to the relief of the judges, swept his crime against humanity into his inventory. “Eh. At least I had fun cooking them!”

---

“*Thank you.*”

“Uh...you’re welcome?” Puffy’s brow furrowed with confusion as she watched Dream nearly cry over her dish. “...Are you okay?”

“He’s just a bit emotional,” Technoblade drawled. “I think your dish is the first good one today.”

“But they’re just french fries?”

Technoblade jabbed a thumb over his shoulder. “See that patch of dirt over there? We had to dig a hole there so we could dispose of Sapnap’s attempt.”

Puffy looked to the mound of overturned dirt. The grass around it was already starting to wilt. “Ah,” she said.

“Yup.” Technoblade reached out, poked a fry, and when it didn’t snap his finger or attempt to eat him alive, gingerly bit into it. He blinked with surprise. “Hey, this is pretty good.”

“You’re always welcome to get more at McPuffy’s,” Puffy told him.

“You know what? I actually might.”

---

The contest ended with Puffy significantly richer and Dream significantly more traumatized. Technoblade took one look at his thousand-yard stare, sighed, and nudged him in the shoulder.

Dream snapped out of his fugue to blink at Technoblade. “You good?” The piglin hybrid asked dryly.

“I’m going to be having nightmares about potatoes tonight,” was the faintly horrified response.

Technoblade checked the sky. The sun was already sinking below the horizon, splashing vibrant gold and rosepetal pink across the clouds. “Tell you what,” he said to Dream, “Why don’t we make some potato chips?”

Dream eyed him. “Is it the same recipe you gave Tommy?”

“Pretty much, but edible. And without glitter.”

Dream looked uncertain. Probably because he feared more trauma. Technoblade huffed.

“Listen, Dream. I gotta defend potatoes, okay? Everyone else made them look bad—er, almost everyone. The Captain did alright.”

“Oh,” said Dream. “Uh. Okay then?”

Technoblade grinned and got to his feet. “Then c’mon, nerd. I’ll show you how to make *real* potato chips.”

## **229.** *(credit to Rachel006)*

“What the fuck are you doing here?”

“Hi to you too, Tommy,” Dream said from where he was sprawled on Tommy’s bed. “I’m doing good, thanks for asking. How are you?”

Tommy scowled at him. “Get off my bed.”

“No.”

Tommy scowled harder. “Dream. Get off. My. Bed.”

“Five more minutes?” Dream asked plaintively. “As a favor to a friend?”

Tommy studied the other looper. Dream seemed...off. They’d gotten to know each other pretty well since they’d reached a mutual understanding, and while they were *nowhere* near close enough to call each other “friends” or *break into each other’s houses*, he *did* know Dream well enough now to tell that something was seriously wrong.

“Fine,” he grunted. “Five minutes.” And then he’d kick Dream out to go mope somewhere else and cleanse his house with fire, because the last thing he wanted was *any* trace of the man inside his home.

Dream hummed in acknowledgment and returned to staring blankly at the ceiling. Tommy squinted at him for a few moments, then gave up trying to figure him out and pulled out his communicator to set a timer. It wasn’t any of his business. He didn’t need to know why Dream was sulking.

...Really. It was *none of his business*. He didn’t need to ask—

“Why the fuck are you acting so mopey?”

—Prime fucking *damnit*. Tommy gritted his teeth and spammed the down arrow on his communicator, watching as the minutes ticked down from their automatic setting at 00:30:00.

00:29:00.

0:20:00.

0:17:00.

“I lost my leg.”

The timer jerked to a stop at 00:13:00. Tommy slowly looked up to stare at Dream. “*Excuse me?*”

“I lost my leg,” Dream repeated, still staring at the ceiling. He reached down and lifted the blanket so Tommy could see his legs—or, well, *leg*, given that one of his trouser legs was now conspicuously flattened several inches above his knee.

“What the fuck,” said Tommy.

“Apparently,” Dream said, “amputations remain after respawn if the limb gets eaten.”

“What the *fuck*,” Tommy repeated.

Dream let the blanket fall. Now that Tommy was looking for it, the absence of the limb remained *very* conspicuously outlined in the thick fabric. Somehow, the loss of a limb felt more unsettling than anything else they’d experienced in these loops. Death had grown—well, not *boring*, but it wasn’t so alarming anymore after the first seven times. War and conflict were easily resolved by running away or abusing their knowledge of the future. But losing a limb—

—losing a limb was permanent. It was going to stay until the loop reset, and they didn’t know how *long* that would take.

“I can’t run anymore,” Dream said. Tommy sucked in a sharp breath. Running was important to Dream; he liked to be on the move, liked to go sprinting through open fields so the wind in his hair and the burn in his legs would remind him that he was free. His speed was what he

most prided himself in. Taking that away was like taking away a fundamental part of what made Dream *Dream*.

“Well shit,” said Tommy, then stopped because he didn’t know what else to say. The silence lingered between them for a long, stretching moment.

“This sucks,” Dream informed the ceiling.

“... Yeah.”

Dream inhaled, then huffed out something that might have been a chuckle. A pained grin crawled onto his face. “This sucks,” he repeated. His grin widened, wobbled, and cracked at the edges. “This—this fucking *sucks*.”

“You can sleep here tonight,” Tommy blurted. “I’ll just—uh—find somewhere else—I’ll go grab your, uh, your stuff—”

“Don’t bother,” Dream said, still smiling that horrible smile. His eyes were glassy and very wide. “I didn’t have a lot on me.”

“Okay, uh—I can—bring you food. Later.”

“Okay. Thanks, Tommy.”

“Yeah. Uh. I’m. Sorry. Bye.”

Dream was very, very still save for the rapid rise and fall of his chest. Tommy fled the house so he didn’t have to see him cry.

---

Soon, Dream found himself undergoing physical therapy—courtesy of Ponk, the SMP’s only decent medical professional. Ponk, oddly enough, had also been quick to offer help with designing a prosthetic. In fact, he seemed to know a *lot* about prosthetics. When Dream questioned his knowledge, Ponk had sent him a flat look, stated “I used to be a doctor on an anarchy server,” and returned to explaining the basics of creating a blueprint. Dream conceded that that backstory explained Ponk’s knowledge well enough.

In the meantime, though, he was fitted with a rudimentary, jointed peg-leg of sorts to get him used to the feel of a prosthetic socket. He...well frankly, he despised it. It was heavy, unwieldy, and *different* from what he was used to. It was just straight-up *odd*, too, because while he didn’t experience any phantom pain, his leg felt like it was *still there*, sometimes. Whenever he placed the prosthetic where it would have been previously impossible, his brain just couldn’t seem to comprehend what was happening and it created so much discomfort that some days he couldn’t even get out of bed.



His friends were supportive. *Prime*, they were so supportive. Someone showed up at his doorstep every day to make sure he was properly taking care of himself. They brought him food, regaled him with accounts of current events, and made sure to be there for him on particularly bad days. He didn't know why losing his leg was affecting him so much. Perhaps it was how *new* it was—a traumatic experience repetition had not yet numbed him to.

So Dream did what he always did. He learned to deal with it. And to do that, he turned to a foolproof coping mechanism: humor.

---

“So who put you on babysitting duty?”

“It's not babysitting—”

“Fine. Who put you on ‘let's-keep-Dream-busy-so-he-doesn't-have-another-mental-breakdown’ duty?”

Ranboo sighed. “I didn't have anyone else to do this puzzle with,” he admitted. He pressed a puzzle piece into the half-finished puzzle on the table between them. “Hey, I got one!”

Dream raised an eyebrow. “So I'm your last resort?”

“No!” Ranboo protested. “No, no, I—I did want to do it with you, do you—not like the puzzle?”

“Relax, Ranboo, I'm messing with you.” Dream held up the puzzle piece he'd been fidgeting with for the past five minutes. “I can't figure out where this one goes. You have any ideas? I'm...*stumped*.”

“Let me look at it,” Ranboo said, reaching across the table—only to pause. He slowly looked up at the man across from him. Then he lifted a finger, put it back down, opened his mouth, shut it, and proceeded to stare at Dream for a good five seconds.

“What?” Dream asked, face perfectly straight.

“You,” said Ranboo. “Did you just—”

He cut himself off, hoping Dream would finish the sentence for him. Unfortunately, the man had no mercy. “Did I *what*, Ranboo?”

“Um. I. Nevermind?”

“No, no, what did you want to ask?”

Ranboo squirmed as he tried to figure out if it would be socially appropriate to broach the subject. “Did you...erm, uh, did you...”

“Yeah?”

“...Did you...m-make a pun? About, uh...”

“About what?”

Ranboo, coward that he was, forewent actually saying the words in order to point at Dream’s leg. Dream stared at him until he started sweating, then shrugged.

“Yup. I did.”

Ranboo...had no words. His expression said enough.

“You had to admit that was a real knee-slapper,” Dream defended.

Ranboo stared at him with undisguised horror. “That was *terrible*.”

“Thanks.”

*“That wasn’t a compliment?!”*

“I’m taking it as one. Here, you take this piece—I’m going to see if I can finish the frame...”

---

Dream paused halfway through lifting his leg towards the ceiling. “Ponk,” he said, “Do you think it would be easier if I just learned to walk on my hands?”

Ponk didn’t even look up from where he was wrist-deep in wood shavings. “Hey, if that’s what you want. But you still gotta relearn walking on your feet. How’s this look?”

He held up the prosthetic. Dream craned his head from where he was lying on the bed to get a good look at it. “It looks...leglike?” he offered.

Ponk, apparently satisfied with this answer, set it back on the table. “It’s a wooden prototype. The actual one’s gonna be iron, but I need the wood one to check the fit and whatnot.”

“Okay. Do you know any exercises for walking on your hands?”

“I do physical therapy, not gymnastics. Do your exercises.”

Dream sighed, but obediently continued his exercises.

---

“...Is that your new leg?”

“No,” Dream said. “Still a prototype. Ponk wanted to get me used to the shape and weight first before he finalized it.”

“It looks—cool,” Tommy said. Ever since the incident, he’d been practically tip-toeing around Dream. Dream kind of hated it. So—

“I’m going to paint it neon green when it’s done,” Dream said.

As expected, Tommy’s face contorted with revulsion. “Why the *fuck* —”

“Hey, it’s my leg! I get to customize it!”

“I already go blind every time I look at your hoodie!”

“I like the color! It’s my aesthetic!”

“Your aesthetic is an *unripe lemon!*”

“C’mon, Tommy, have some sympathy. I’m on my last leg here.” Dream paused.

“...Literally.”

The look of *sheer disgust* sent his way would remain a fond memory for many weeks to come.

---

“Oh nononono—ow! Shit!”

“Hey, it’s fine. Try again.”

“This is the *fifth* time—”

“It’s a prosthetic. It’s going to be a big adjustment.”

“I *know* how to *walk*, Ponk! Just this stupid—*fucking—argh.*”

“Look, Dream—take it from a guy who’s guided people through this before—it takes time, okay? You have to be patient.”

“...I just want my leg back.”

“I know.”

“I hate physical therapy.”

“Most people do, yeah.”

“I hate how slow I am.”

“We’re working on that.”

A long moment of silence.

“...Okay, but if I *did* learn to walk on my hands instead—”

“I’ll teach you a handstand once you can walk with that leg, *unassisted*, across the room. Deal?”

“...Deal.”

---

The announcement of Dream’s recovery was met with jubilation, congratulations, and of course, partying—because the SMP wouldn’t be the SMP without some form of unhinged celebration every once in a while. Thankfully, it was a much smaller occasion than the disastrous festivals Tommy and Dream were familiar with. Weaponry and alcohol were banned. The main event was a potluck-style dinner, where everyone brought a bit of something. Two cases of (unintentional) food poisoning and a copious amount of friendly banter later, everyone began drifting off into their own little groups to converse—at which point Dream approached Tommy.

“Thanks for coming tonight,” he said. “Your, uh, ice was pretty popular.”

Tommy had indeed brought a bowl of ice to the potluck. Most of it had been used up in an ice eating contest (Tubbo had won; the smile on his face as he crunched ice between his teeth would feature prominently in Tommy’s nightmares for the next few days), and the sad remnants were now more liquid than solid. “Fuck yeah, it was,” he declared. “People have good taste, you know? Ice. Crunchy water. Poggest food in the world. *Cool*est food in the world—”

“Uh-huh. Definitely didn’t have anything to do with your lack of cooking skills.”

Tommy bristled. “You forgot to add baking soda to your shitty chocolate cake, you—”

“*ANYWAY*,” Dream said over him, “I have something to show you.”

Tommy was instantly suspicious—but it wasn’t like he could say *no*. “...What is it?”

Without breaking eye contact, Dream reached down, grasped the fabric of his pant leg, and dragged it up to reveal the eye-searing green his prosthetic had been painted.

The party was unceremoniously ended when Tommy attempted to murder Dream.

---

“Hey. Hey Bad.”

“Yes?” Bad asked, turning to Dream with a longsuffering smile pasted on his face. By now, everyone on the server was—well, not *used* to Dream’s antics, exactly, but they knew what to expect.

“I learned something new recently,” Dream chirped. “Want to see?”

Bad’s smile twitched, caught between the intrinsic politeness urging him to say yes and the logical instinct telling him to run far away, but Dream wasn’t going to give him a chance to say no. Without waiting for an answer, he bent down, shifted onto his hands, and did a handstand.

“Oh,” said Bad, pleasantly surprised. “Wow. That’s impressive! I didn’t know you could do that.”

“Ponk taught me,” Dream told him proudly. “So I can stand without my legs, you know?”

“Oh,” Bad said again, this time with significantly less cheer. “That’s...nice.”

“It is! And guess what else I can do?” Still balanced on his hands, Dream tucked both his flesh and lime-green leg to his chest and proceeded to scuttle towards Bad like a demented crab.

The terrified screeching that ensued was *glorious*.

---

When he started running out of puns, Dream found a new way to screw with people. Of course, he went to Ponk for his professional opinion first—because Dream was responsible like that.

“As a professional,” Ponk said, “I gotta say this is a terrible idea.”

“But?”

“*But*, as someone who appreciates chaos, I say go for it. I’ll even make sure your designs aren’t messing up your leg or anything.”

The way Dream began smiling should’ve alarmed Ponk—but hey, at least the next few months would be a *lot* of fun now.

---

“Wil! Wil, have you met Craig yet?”

“What?” Wilbur asked, turning around. He was not expecting to come face to face with a wooden leg, nor to see Dream balancing on one foot while holding out the aforementioned detached wooden leg.

“This is Craig,” said Dream.

“Why,” said Wilbur, “does Craig have googly eyes?”

“So he can see, obviously.” Dream thankfully lowered Craig before Wilbur could give in to his hindbrain instincts of *kill it with fire*. The mismatched googly eyes—one slightly larger than the other—rattled with the movement. Wilbur watched, disturbed, as the other man fitted the prosthetic back on his leg and swung it around to check that it was secure.

“Anyway,” he said to Wilbur, “Craig was very happy to meet you.”

“Uh,” said Wilbur.

“Craig says to have a good twenty-four hours, Wilbur,” Dream said ominously. He then proceeded to bend over, balance on his hands, and scurry away like some sort of cave-dwelling gremlin.

Wilbur silently vowed to avoid Dream at all costs.

---

“Hey Schlatt!”

“What the fuck,” was Schlatt’s greeting. “You. That. What the fuck is that.”

Dream looked down. “My shoes?”

“No—*that*.”

“...My leg?”

“That’s a *leg*?” Schlatt squinted, then looked away and blinked rapidly to get rid of the spots in his vision. “Why the fuck is it so—so—*bright*?”

“Glitter,” Dream said, like that made any sense. He stuck out his leg a bit further, showing off the thick coat of holographic glitter coating its surface. The joints *crunched* disturbingly whenever he bent the knee.

“It looks like the fucking *sun*.”

“Hey, I had to glamorize it somehow.”

“You did not have to use that much glitter—” Schlatt paused as a new thought occurred to him. “—*fuck*, it’s going to get everywhere.”

“That’s the idea,” Dream chirped. “I glamorize things wherever I go. You want some glitter?”

Schlatt began backing away, still furiously blinking light out of his eyes. “Uh—no, not really.”

“Don’t be stupid. Everyone wants glitter!” Dream proceeded to pull his ultra-sparkly leg off, hoist it up like a baseball bat, and *begin hopping towards Schlatt*.

Wisely, Schlatt chose to flee for his life.

---

“Your new leg looks cool,” Sam said. “Ponk said something about painting it?”

“Yeah! I’ve been thinking about gold or bronze or something. Ponk says paint would last longer and be easier than coating the whole leg in metal, so he told me to ask you about how you painted your mask.”

Sam’s hand came up to his mask on instinct. “Ah,” he said. “Yes, that’s...something I can help you with. Would you mind if I take a look at the leg?”

“Yeah, of course! Just give me a second to empty it.”

Sam’s brow furrowed. “Empty it?”

Dream proceeded to take off his prosthetic, grasp it by the shin, and *unscrew it at the knee*. Sam watched in dumbfounded silence as he messed with the top of the now-detached segment of the prosthetic until it clicked open to reveal a hidden compartment full of—

“Are those *crackers*?”

Dream turned the leg upside-down and began dumping his cracker stash into his inventory. “Yeah?”

“In—in your leg. You have crackers. *In your leg.*”

Dream shrugged, shoved the last cracker into his mouth, and held out his now-empty leg. “Yesh,” he said through a mouthful of crumbs. Then he blinked. “Oh wai’, didja wan’ shome?”

Slowly, Sam sat forward, set his elbows on his knees, and lowered his head into his hands. “Ponk had something to do with this, didn’t he,” he said to the floor.

“Can’t say anything. Patient-doctor confidentiality and all that.”

“Dream, Ponk is the only doctor on the server.”

“Hmm. You sure you don’t want a cracker? They’re really good.”

Sam closed his eyes and prayed for the world to one day make sense.

---

“I don’t think I like Craig,” Wilbur whispered to Tommy.

“Craig is an inanimate object,” Tommy pointed out. Like, you know, a reasonable person.

“But I don’t *like* it,” Wilbur hissed. “I keep finding eyes—it’s Craig, *I know it*. It can *see*. ”

Tommy went to point out that again, Dream’s prosthetic was *not* sentient, only to be stopped by Wilbur’s hasty “*shhhhhh*”. The two of them watched in silence as Dream jogged past them. The many, many googly eyes covering his leg rattled like low-budget maracas.

“So,” said Tommy when the man was out of earshot. “You said you’ve been...finding eyes?”

In answer, Wilbur pointed to the ground. One of Craig’s googly eyes had fallen off and now laid in the dirt, staring up at them. “I keep finding them in my house, ” he whispered.

“Huh,” said Tommy. “The...eyes.”

“Yes. On the floor. And on my furniture. And *under my bed*.”

Tommy decided not to ask Wilbur why he’d been looking for plastic eyes under his bed. “Okay,” he said instead. “Is that why you look like you haven’t slept in a week?”

“They’re *everywhere*, Tommy.”

“I’ll, uh, I’ll talk to Dream about it.”

“He’s on Craig’s side,” Wilbur hissed. “There’s no escape.”

“Right,” Tommy said, gently placed his hands on Wilbur’s shoulders, and began steering him in the general direction of his house. “Why don’t you sleep over at my place tonight? I’ll, erm, take care of Craig if he shows up.”

“*It knows where I am*. ”

“Okay, Wilbur. I think you need to sleep.”

---



“Hey Foolish!”

Foolish spun around and blinked with surprise. “Dream! When’d you get here?”

“Eh, not that long ago.” Dream peered at the tools in Foolish’s hands. “You building again?”

“Yup! Finishing up some of the temple decor. Whatcha up to?”

“Testing out my new prosthetic,” Dream told him. Foolish’s brow furrowed with mild confusion.

“That’s...what, the fifth one? Are the others not working for you?”

“They’re working. I’m just trying things for fun. Add different functions to each leg, see how well I can walk with it...”

“Sounds cool!” Foolish crouched so he could get a better look at Dream’s prosthetic. It didn’t have any obvious extra features. “What does this one do?”

“Jump.”

“...Jump?”

In answer, Dream twisted his leg to show the enchantments inscribed into the back.

“Knockback, Feather Falling, some other enchantments—and when I put them on my leg—”

He took a couple steps backward, tapped his foot twice, and *stomped*. The resulting explosion of sand knocked Foolish over. When he sat back up, he thought Dream had disappeared—but a quick glance upwards revealed his assumptions to be false.

Foolish looked down at the shoe-shaped crater at his feet. Then he looked up at the figure rocketing off into the distance.

“Huh,” he said. “That’s...interesting.”

---

### ***Private Messaging: Dream***

<TommyInnit> you gotta stop scaring wilbur

<TommyInnit> hes getting paranoidd again

<Dream> but

<Dream> it's funny

*<TommyInnit> yeah its fuckin hilarious*

*<TommyInnit> but the last one ws too far*

*<Dream> I take he didn't appreciate the message made of googly eyes*

*<TommyInnit> he didnt.*

*<Dream> ok*

*<Dream> i'll dismantle craig and leave his corpse at your doorstep tonight*

*<TommyInnit> his?>*

*<Dream> :)*

---

“Techno—”

“I’m tellin’ you, Phil. There’s a demon out there.”

“...I’m pretty sure it’s just Dream fucking with you.”

“The thing was walkin’ on its arms! Humans don’t just do that!”

“Techno, seriously, that’s enough salt—it’s going to get everywhere, salt isn’t even for demons—*Techno*—”

---

The moment Dream stepped through the door to her office, Puffy could tell something was wrong. His entire body was skewed left, away from his prosthetic, and he was limping heavily.

“Dream!” Puffy rushed to support him before he fell. “What’s wrong? Why are you limping? Is your leg acting u—”

Her next words cut off when her gaze landed on Dream’s prosthetic.

“Puffy?” Dream asked, trying to move past her to the couch but blocked by her body. “Is everything okay?”

“Um,” said Puffy, still staring at Dream’s prosthetic foot—which was now specifically molded to accommodate the sparkly four-inch heel it was jammed into. “...Are you trying out

new leg?”

“Yeah!”

The heel in itself wouldn’t have been too strange, but—Dream’s other foot was still in a sneaker. Which meant that he was stuck half-limping, half-hopping because one of his legs was now a few inches longer than the other.

“I didn’t have time to swap it out for my regular one before my appointment,” Dream informed her cheerily, like both of them weren’t aware that that excuse was fully bullshit. It took Dream only a few seconds to pull off his prosthetic and change it out for a new one. Puffy knew this because she had watched him traumatize many people by pulling his leg off and wielding it like the world’s most terrifying nunchucks.

“Okay,” she said, capitulating to his reasoning because she simply didn’t have the braincells needed to process this situation. “Why don’t you sit down?”

Dream obliged, sinking down into his usual chair for their therapy sessions. Puffy took the chair opposite him and waited patiently for him to reorient himself comfortably. When he was ready, he looked up at her. Puffy allowed herself to relax a bit as they settled back into their routine.

“So,” she began, asking the question she always started each session with, “how was your week?”

“It’s been okay.” Dream shrugged. “Not much happened.”

“Any trouble?”

“Not really? It’s been...calm, I guess. Everything’s slow going, like usual. I’m just taking it all *one step at a time*, you know? Literally.”

Puffy’s smile grew distinctly pained. “That’s...great to hear, Dream. That’s *great* to hear. ”

---

“Dream!” George pounded on the door. “Dream, open the door!”

“It’s unlocked,” a voice called from inside.

George tried the knob. Sure enough, it turned. He pushed the door open and stepped in. A quick glance around the living room did not immediately reveal Dream.

“Over here,” someone whisper-shouted from the couch. George rounded the furniture to find Dream half-sprawled across his couch.

“Where are you? You were supposed to meet us at the Community House ten minutes ago!”

“Shhh!” Dream hissed. George balked, confused.

“What?” he asked, lowering his voice and glancing furtively around the room. No immediate cause for Dream’s odd behavior presented itself. “What happened?”

“I can’t go out,” Dream said.

“...Why?”

He pointed at the prosthetic on the couch cushion next to him. It was only then that George noticed it had been tucked between a towel and a miniature pillow. “My leg fell asleep.”

George stared at him for a long, long moment. Finally, he asked, “Why are you like this?”

Dream *cackled*.

**230.** *seeing red, pt. 4* ([see previous parts of this loop here](#))

“So to summarize,” Technoblade said, “Tommy is possessed by the Egg. The Egg wants to kill or possess everyone. You want to...save Tommy and kill the Egg.”

Dream scratched absently at the blood drying on his palms. “..Yes.”

“And you want me to help you.”

“The Egg’s faction is literally called the Eggpire,” Dream pointed out. “They want to infect the entire server. Isn’t it the Syndicate’s mission to fight tyranny?”

Technoblade’s expression didn’t change, but Dream did notice the sudden stillness in his posture. “...How did you know about the Syndicate?”

Shit. Right. The only people who were supposed to know about the Syndicate was the Syndicate themselves.

“I have my sources.” When Technoblade’s eyes only narrowed, Dream sighed. “Look. You don’t trust me. Fair. I don’t trust you either. But the Egg is a threat to all of us, and if we don’t take care of it now, it’ll just get stronger. It’ll *spread*. You saw what it did to Tommy. It’ll try to do that to us too.”

“So you say,” Technoblade mused. Then he sighed. “Look, Dream. We might be on good terms, but I’m kinda suspicious about how you learned about the Syndicate. You might need my help, but I don’t need yours. That’s what it’s like. So yeah, I’ll help you—on one condition.”

“What is it?”

“Tell me what your ‘sources’ are.”

Dream deliberated with himself for a moment. "...You won't believe me."

"Yeah? Sounds like an excuse."

"Dreams," Dream said. "I can see the future."

Technoblade stared at him, expression flat. "Seriously? That's what you're goin' with?"

"I'm studying to become a...prophet of Prime." Dream maintained eye contact with Technoblade. He kept his face placid and his hands relaxed. "Seeing the future is part of the territory. Your Syndicate plays a major part in some of the futures I've seen."

"Some of," Technoblade echoed. "Not *the* future?"

"No, I see possibilities. There's no such thing as a set future."

"Right. And what are we doing in some of these...futures?"

Dream cracked a smile. "Well, in one, you were breaking me out of prison."

"...Prison?"

"If I'd made some...bad decisions, I would've wound up in prison. So I avoided those."

"Right," Technoblade drawled. "And I'm assumin' you can't predict what I'm goin' to eat for breakfast tomorrow?"

"No," Dream said, "but I can tell you that you have voices in your head. They demand blood and shout 'E' a lot."

Technoblade's expression went dangerously flat. Dream kept his placid facade in place and waited for him to sort it out in his head.

"You know about the voices," Technoblade said after an extended pause. "Phil's the only one who knows. And he doesn't even know about the 'E' thing—stop, Chat, I'm tryin' to have a serious conversation with Dream here."

"You complained about them a lot in the future."

"What made me trust you enough to tell you about them in the future?"

"We were two of the last six standing in the Eggpocalypse."

"Egg...pocalypse." Technoblade's chair creaked as he leaned back into it and let out something close to a disbelieving chuckle. "What, the Egg started the apocalypse?"

"Eggpocalypse," Dream repeated.

This time, Technoblade really did chuckle—a breathy, humorless "*ha*" that was more sigh than laugh. "So you can see the future. Sure. Not totally sold, but I'm pretty sure you're good

enough at lyin' to avoid makin' up something that crazy." He took a breath, let it out, and looked back up at Dream. "I'll need to discuss this with the rest of the Syndicate."

"That's reasonable."

"If they're not on board, I'm not goin' to try to change their minds."

That was unfortunate, but Dream would find another way if he had to. "Okay."

Technoblade huffed. "...You have anywhere to stay in the meantime?"

"I—" *have a house*, was the instinctual response. Dream swallowed it; this wasn't the time for banter. "...No. Not nearby."

"Wow, finally admitting that you're homeless?"

He had a very large, very empty base. He didn't want to go back to it. "*I have a house*. It's just...far."

"Yeah, yeah, sure. You can sleep in one of the guest rooms until I bring it up with the Syndicate. Just the room, though. Don't touch anything else."

"Okay."

Technoblade nodded sharply and rose to his feet. "Follow me," he said.

The piglin hybrid led Dream up to the next floor, where he pulled open a door at the end of the hall and motioned inside. "This one's yours," he said gruffly. "You can sleep here until the others decide if we're goin' to help or not. If they don't—"

"I'll go," Dream promised. "I'm not trying to freeload off of you."

Technoblade offered a sharp nod of acknowledgement and stepped aside to allow Dream entrance. Dream shuffled in, performed the expected cursory glance around the room, then turned back to Technoblade. "...Thanks," he said. "For, uh, honoring the favor."

Technoblade shrugged. "What can I say? I'm an honorable guy." He stepped back. "Get some sleep, Dream. You look like you're about to fall over."

The door clicked shut. Dream waited, listening until he heard Technoblade's footsteps fade away.

And then he promptly fell back on the bed, body trembling with adrenaline. The amount of bullshitting he'd just done left him feeling like he'd outran a herd of angry piglins.

It had been a long time since he and Tommy had had to *convincingly* lie their way out of a situation, and Technoblade was not easily fooled. Luckily, though, lies were often as farfetched as the truth on the SMP. Being able to see the future was pretty much on the same level of believability as things like time travel and revival books. The Eggpocalypse story was fairly plausible, too, even if it had never actually happened. There was still the matter of

how he was technically trying to become a *priest*, not a prophet—but hopefully Technoblade was more of a non-practicing follower of Prime and wouldn't notice the difference.

With a heavy sigh, Dream peeled himself off the comfortable bed. He was fairly familiar with this room, so it was pretty easy to find the loose floorboard in the corner and pry it up. The space beneath was narrow and full of dust bunnies and cobwebs, but with a bit of wiggling, he managed to stuff the book he'd stolen from the Church into it. That was good—he wouldn't have to worry about losing it if he got killed.

Satisfied, he replaced the floorboard and slithered out from under the desk. From there, it was just a matter of wrangling his aching limbs into cooperating long enough for him to get out of his hoodie. It was definitely beyond repair; he'd have to drop by one of his hideouts in the mainland and get another one soon.

But that was a problem for later-Dream. Current-Dream just tossed the hoodie on the floor, staggered over to the bed, and flopped facedown onto it.

He was asleep in minutes.

---

Ascension to priesthood wasn't exactly *easy*. There were rituals to be completed, vows to be made, tasks to done, and so on. That being said, the religion of Prime was far from strict. The majority of followers were non-practicing, only displaying their belief through invocations of Prime's name or muttered prayers in times of need. Rather than rituals or rites, emphasis was placed on genuine faith.

Dream, having witnessed firsthand exactly how much the universe liked to screw people over at the *worst possible times*, was a very strong believer in the existence of a sentient higher power. Because seriously, his life was a cosmic joke. And jokes had to have writers, fun existential dread notwithstanding.

So yeah, Dream had a lot of faith. And that meant he had access to shortcuts. A lot of the lengthier rituals could be glossed over in favor of prayers with the caveat that the reciter had strong faith. Dream was thankful for that; he *really* didn't want to have to hunt down fifteen bells, especially given that every village within a ten-mile radius of settled land had likely already been looted to hell and back.

Unfortunately, one of the unavoidable requirements for the rituals meant that they had to occur on holy grounds—which meant that Dream spent a good portion of his days either brewing Potions of Invisibility or using them to sneak through Eggpire-patrolled territory. While running into people was actually pretty rare—he could see them coming from a distance and just take the long way around—it was better to be safe than to be sorry. Dream knew he was a target for the Crimson, and he didn't have the protection of priesthood yet. Until he had it, he'd have to stay under the radar.

On his trips through the mainland, he would catch occasional glimpses of Tommy. His fellow looper was always at a distance and always alone, unlike the other Eggpire members, who seemed to stick in pairs or groups. The reason, though, soon became clear. With each sighting, Tommy appeared more and more... *normal*. The red veins beneath his skin became less prominent, his eyes still bloodshot but only to the degree a poor night of sleep would cause. Soon, it was almost like nothing was wrong with him at all. And without him being constantly spotted with the Eggpire, nobody else on the server had any idea that Tommy was now under the Egg's control. In fact, most people still operated under the assumption that Tommy was *immune*. And given that Tommy hadn't exactly been running around socializing beforehand, his lack of communication wasn't out of the ordinary.

All this came down to one thing: nobody would see Tommy coming. He'd been turned into a sleeper agent for the Crimson.

When Dream figured *that* out, it had taken quite a bit of self-restraint not to start cursing aloud. He couldn't let Tommy get close to the others, not when the Egg might try to infect or murder them. He had to send out a warning—one that the Eggpire wouldn't notice.

Problem was, Dream wasn't exactly seen as a *trustworthy* character in the current timeline. It wasn't anywhere near as bad as Loop Zero, given that he hadn't broken off ties with everyone or tried to use leverage against the rest of the server, but he wasn't well-liked either. Which meant if Dream went around warning people, they'd either brush him off or warn Tommy about what Dream was doing. Neither of those outcomes were good.

So Dream did the only thing he could think of: leaving anonymous notes. This, admittedly, wasn't that much better of a strategy, but it might *at least* get people's guards up.

...Or so Dream hoped. Only time would tell if it worked.

---

There was a piece of paper nailed to the top of his chest.

Foolish warily tore it off and squinted down at it. "Huh," he muttered. "What *is* this?"

He flipped the paper this way and that, hoping to find some clue that would make the message less cryptic. When that didn't work, he took a quick scan of his surroundings, but found no signs that might point to the identity of the note's writer.

"Huh," Foolish muttered as he looked back down at the note. "Wonder what—"

---

"—this means."



“We don’t know who left it,” Sapnap reminded Quackity. “It might just be a joke.”

Quackity scowled. “It’s a shitty joke. Nobody goes around writing weirdly ominous stuff about Tommy on paper and sticking it to people’s doors as a *joke*.” His eyes narrowed. “...Something fishy’s going on.”

“I think it might be a genuine warning,” Karl muttered. He ran his finger over the jagged streaks of ink. “Look. It was written—really sloppy. Like whoever wrote it was—”

---

“—in a rush. Do you recognize this handwriting?”

“No,” Eret hummed. Flecks of light scattered across the paper as he tilted it. “But then again—not a lot of people write things by hand around here, so...”

“Hm.” Puffy crossed her arms. “...Do you—”

---

“—think Tommy’s okay?”

Fran barked. Sam sighed and set aside the note so he could press his forehead into her side.

“I don’t even know how they *found* my base,” he muttered into her fur. “This place is supposed to be *hidden*.”

Fran barked again and proceeded to treat Sam to several doggy kisses.

---

Tubbo stared at the paper tacked to his door.

“Ranboo?” he called. “Did you leave this?”

“Leave what?” Ranboo asked, coming up beside him. He blinked at the note. “Huh... something happened to Tommy? ‘He’s not himself right now’? What does that mean?”

“Dunno.” Though Tubbo’s voice was light, the look on his face was anything but. “...I think he might be in trouble.”

Ranboo warbled nervously. “We saw him last week...”

“Yes,” Tubbo said bluntly. “And he hasn’t answered his comm since then.”

“He said he would be busy for a bit—”

“He *always* answers comm messages, Ranboo. Even if it’s like, a day late.”

Ranboo grimaced. “...So he’s in trouble.”

“Probably!”

“And we should go help him.”

“Exactly what I was thinking!”

“But the note said—”

“Yeah, yeah, stay away, whatever. We don’t know who wrote it, or why they did it. For all we know, someone’s blackmailing him and trying to keep us from finding out, or something. Best way to get answers is to confront him directly.” When Ranboo still hesitated, Tubbo sighed. “C’mon, bossman. You can’t trust *this*—” he waved the note, “—over *Tommy*, can you? If he’s in trouble—”

“No, no, you’re right. We should. I just. Shouldn’t we ask for help? In case something *is* wrong?”

“...I’ll let Jack know where we’re going,” Tubbo decided. “If we disappear, he knows where to look.”

“Do you *think* we’re going to disappear?”

“Only one way to find out, right?”

---

Dream did his best to appear relaxed even as three pairs of eyes bored into him. They had really pulled out all stops on the intimidation factor—probably to drive home the idea that he wasn’t the one calling the shots here.

“Technoblade told us that you wanted help fighting the Egg,” said Philza. His wings were held stiffly behind him, creating an imposing silhouette in the flickering torchlight. “I think Niki and I would like to hear it from you, though.”

“Okay,” Dream said. “How much do you already know about the Egg?”

“There’s an Eggpire, isn’t there?” Niki asked. “It...I’ve seen the advertisements around the server.”

“Yes. The Egg...it’s sentient. A parasite. It worms its way into people’s heads and makes false promises. And when people believe it—well—that’s how the Eggpire was formed.”

Philza frowned. “So it’s...a cult?”

“A cult with the end goal of world domination, yes. The Eggpire—it wants expansion. It’s always recruiting, always bringing more people in—and if anyone gets in the way of that, they’ll either be killed or...forcibly recruited.” Dream swallowed. “I—Tommy and I found out a little while ago that he was immune to the Egg. He couldn’t hear it. And—well. The Egg didn’t like that. So. It, um, it physically infected him.”

“I thought you said he was immune.”

“Yes, *psychologically* immune. The Egg couldn’t trick him into believing its promises because he couldn’t hear it. So it...did something else. I—I didn’t even realize he was missing, but...when he came back, he...it...it’s controlling his body. He’s still aware of what’s happening. He just can’t fight it.”

“I did see Tommy,” Technoblade chimed in. “Not gonna lie, it was kinda, uh, not the greatest. Pretty terrible, actually.”

Dream eyed the other two members of the Syndicate, trying to assess their reactions. Philza looked troubled, which was to be expected—after L’Manberg’s destruction, he had actually remained quite close to Tommy. Niki, on the other hand, was on slightly more negative terms with Dream’s fellow looper. Her expression—though horrified—was more calculating, like she was weighing the pros and cons of getting involved in this situation.

“I want to save Tommy and destroy the Egg,” Dream stated firmly. He had to lay it out in plain terms, like this was a business transaction. “The Syndicate wants to prevent tyrannies, which is what the Eggpire will turn into if it’s left to run rampant. We share a common interest in fighting the Eggpire.”

“And what exactly is it that you expect the Syndicate to do?” Niki asked, her voice forcibly level.

“To fight off the Eggpire while I get the Crimson out of Tommy. I’m training to become a prophet of Prime, and if I can do that, I’ll be able to use certain rituals to help him.” That was stretching the truth, but Dream didn’t really have time to get into the specifics of *how* the whole ‘save Tommy’ thing would work. “Healing Tommy is a time-sensitive problem—I don’t know if he can infect other people through touch, but when we fought, I think he might’ve tried to infect me by—uh—through, um, through a wound. He’s a danger to everyone on the server—if we let him go on like this, he might be able to infect the entire server.”

Niki inclined her head in acknowledgment. “But *destroying* the Egg?”

“A lot of TNT should do it. I have a lot of that. I just can’t fight the Eggpire off *while* laying TNT.”

“So you need allies.”

“Yes.”

“And you turned to us,” Technoblade spoke up.

“...Yes.” Dream took a deep breath. “Look, I—I know none of you have really—*positive* impressions of me—” he ignored Niki’s quiet snort “—but *please*, this is something that needs to be done. If you all want individual favors from me, or a favor to the Syndicate as a whole, I can exchange that.”

The three members of the Syndicate exchanged looks. Philza was the first to speak. “Hey Dream, would you mind stepping out for a second? I think we should discuss this in private.”

That wasn’t a *no*. Dream nodded and made to stand, only to hesitate at the last moment. “Can I ask one thing? Unrelated to all this, just—”

“Yeah mate, go for it.”

Dream jabbed a thumb at the name carved into the back of his chair. “Is Ranboo...okay?”

“He has personal business to take care of,” Technoblade said, his clipped words a warning that this wasn’t a subject Dream wanted to pursue. Dream nodded in silent acknowledgment and made his way to the door of the Syndicate hideout. He stepped out into the Stronghold hallway, shut the door behind him, and sat down to wait.

It was a long wait. The thick walls and heavy door were essentially soundproof by nature, and so Dream had no idea what direction the conversation was going in. He could only hope that they would agree to help; he couldn’t take down the Egg by himself, and his only true ally at this point in time was Punz. Punz was part of the Eggpire.

An almost indeterminate amount of rumination later, the door creaked open. Dream swiftly got to his feet and strode in. He stopped at the edge of the table and turned back to look at Technoblade as he shut the door.

“We agreed to help,” said Technoblade, “on the condition that you owe the Syndicate a favor.”

Relief crashed down on Dream so suddenly that he had to lock his knees to keep from falling over. “Thank you,” he said as sincerely as he could, mindful to wrangle his voice into something more professional than emotional. “You won’t regret this.”

“That’s what they all say,” Philza muttered, but the glimmer in his eyes let Dream know that he was joking. Niki remained silent. She hid her reservations well, but Dream could tell she wasn’t a hundred percent on board. That was fine. As long as the Egg was destroyed, it wouldn’t matter.

The Syndicate had agreed to help. The server had been warned to stay away from Tommy. The ascension to priesthood was going slow but steadily. The pieces of the plan were slotting into place; now all that was left was to see it through to the end.

Dream took a deep breath, squared his shoulders, and looked up at his new allies. *Just hang on, Tommy*, he murmured in the safety of his mind. *We're coming for you.*

## Chapter End Notes

What's your favorite potato dish? Mine is Chinese potato stir-fry. Potatoes au gratin are a close second

Inspired fics!

A funny [DSMP time loop fic with Wilbur, Tommy, and Dream!](#)

[LOKI TIME LOOP LOKI TIME LOOP L—](#)

More chaotic [DSMP time loops with Tommy, Dream, and Technoblade!](#)

This wonderful [Tommy-centric dimension travel fic!!](#)

A [BNHA time loop fic](#) wherein Tomura Shigaraki chooses Chaos.

[Sorry! boys get trapped in a time loop!](#) Honestly sounds like something they'd do

An [Omori time loop fic](#) in which Sunny tries to fight the angst with comedy and is somewhat successful??

Remix but [Tommy may be the slightest bit evil](#)

A [Bungou Stray Dogs time loop fic!!](#)

And finally, Penh surprised me with a [fanart master doc](#), which will be linked in the end notes of the fic too!

### **Loop Notes**

**226.** This loop was inspired by real life events. The event in question was a play wherein people wielded uno reverse cards instead of guns, and the cards would get progressively larger throughout the play without any character acknowledging the change. It was a very fun play.

**228.** Dream did, in fact, like potato chips. He also liked fries, and McPuffy's became his go-to place for a quick snack.

**229.** I struggled when trying to decide what food item to fill the prosthetic with. I literally sat up in bed at 1:30 AM and went scrambling for my phone, then woke up at 7 the next morning with no recollection of writing "fruit loops!!!!" followed by "Actually cheese cubes" in my Notes app. Writing is fun y'all

On an unrelated note: did you know there are actually prosthetics made to fit high heels? It's so cool :D

# Chapter 47

## Chapter Notes

\*slides new chapter across table like a bribe\* hey there, uh, mind ignoring the fact that I haven't updated in six months?

New chapter!!! :D Yes I have been gone for a while. No this fic is not discontinued; more info on my update schedule will be in the end note.

FANART. WE HAVE SO MUCH COOL FANART. THANK YOU GUYS SO MUCH :D

Fawn has blessed us with [remix!tommy eating cake](#)!! Happy extremely belated birthday!!

Chroma!! Not only did they draw some awesome [tempus!karl fanart AND the tempus storybook I referenced in 123.](#), they also created a [tempus!karl minecraft skin](#)!! I love the colors on everything aaaa

Ren. Ren ur so cool. They drew scenes from an idea of their own creation wherein Tommy gaslights the server into thinking he kidnapped Dream's kid, and the "kid" is just Dream...but turned into a kid. A [very adorable](#) art, as well as some [scene doodles](#)! Discord server went on a whole ideas tangent about the loop too, so if you'd like to read that it's in the fanart channel!

CalmboyL out here with their lovely art style to draw [Tommy showing Dream the age counter...](#) really calling them out for being old 😞

Akto drew this super cool [remix!Tommy](#)!! He has committed no crimes ever what're you talking about

Piper perfectly captured [the glitter duo dynamic](#). They're just a lil' silly goofy your honor

Look at this epic [gacha animation](#) of the Dreaxter loop by ForestVegetable!!!

M1kae also [remade their Endless animation meme](#)! It's so cool hskdjfs

Inspired fics!!

[If you liked remix and/or characters acting out a role in real life, you'll definitely like this one!](#)

A fic in which [TommyInnit potions himself some wings...](#)and the consequences thereof.

A [Dangan Ronpa timeloop fic](#) in which the loopers get up to Shenanagins™!

M1kae added an outtakes installment to their [Loki time loop](#) series, go check it out!

A hilarious [Transformers time loop fic](#) in which many people (bots?) are very, very confused! :D

### **Spotlighted Comments**

**Petrichor\_Candle:** Tommy, gesturing to poultry-ified Chat while Phil lays on the ground, sobbing: Look at all those chickens

**Axinomancy:** Im picturing Dream's leg as a pringles can rn

**LeeLuvid:** "salt isn't for demons" I mean, if you throw a bag of salt hard enough on a demon it can be-

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

**231.** (*credit to SugarStone6043*)

“This isn’t what it looks like!”

“It looks like you’re trying to hide Tommy’s body,” said Punz, staring at the aforementioned body that Dream happened to be dragging by the ankles. Dream winced.

“Okay, so maybe it is what it looks like, but I have a good reason for this—”

“Did you *kill* Tommy?” Sapnap demanded, having been five steps behind Punz and thus seen the scene next.

“N—”

“Did he attack you?” asked George, stepping out from behind Sapnap and scanning the area with a critical eye. “I thought New L’Manberg was trying to negotiate.”

“He didn’t attack me,” said Dream, exasperated.

“So you attacked him?”

“No, I didn’t—” Dream took a deep breath. “Look. I know what this looks like. But I *didn’t kill Tommy.*”

All three of his friends looked doubtfully at the corpse, which clearly sported a terminal case of Arrow To The Face. “You’re trying to hide his body,” George said. “Why would you be trying to hide his body if you didn’t kill him?”

“Tommy got killed by a skeleton. I’m just doing him a favor—”

“You’re doing *Tommy* a favor? You were literally demanding his exile yesterday—”

“—a skeleton? C’mon man, nobody’s going to buy that—”

“—how is that a ‘favor’—”

“Will you let me *explain?!?*”

His friends fell silent and stared at him, waiting. Dream made to press a hand over his face, realized he couldn’t do that while holding Tommy’s ankles, and settled for projecting an aura of Great Disappointment instead. “Look. I didn’t kill Tommy, okay? There was a—”

“What the fuck is happening here?”

Dream, through sheer heroic force of will, managed to withhold a groan. He turned his head to look at the four L’Manbergians who had just arrived at the scene, sighed, and said, “I told you to meet me here for negotiations, didn’t I?”

“T-Tommy?” Tubbo whispered.

“You—” Quackity went white as he registered what he was looking at. And then he lunged for Dream. “YOU BASTARD!”

“I DIDN’T DO ANYTHING!” Dream shouted, dropping Tommy’s legs in favor of ducking away from Quackity’s attack. Quackity didn’t seem to hear him, too busy attempting to turn him into a human shish kebab. Dream’s friends moved forward to intervene, only to find themselves accosted by the other L’Manbergians. Fundy was screaming incoherently, slashing wildly at George, who backed up under the onslaught. Philza, meanwhile, was defending Fundy’s back from Punz and Sapnap, his mouth set in a grim line and his eyes unreadable beneath the brim of his hat. Tubbo avoided the battle altogether, ducking around the fighters and making a beeline towards Tommy’s body. Once he reached it, he just—*folded*, falling to his knees right in the middle of the battlefield.

“DON’T KILL THEM!” Dream shouted over the sound of clashing blades. “THERE’S A PERFECTLY GOOD EXPLANATION AND I CAN EXPLAIN IF YOU ALL STOP TRYING TO MURDER US FOR *ONE SECOND*—”

“*Die*,” Quackity snarled, following up a missed swipe of his axe with a fist to the throat. Dream choked and reflexively punched him upside the head, sending the other man careening backward. Quackity swayed on his feet for two terrifying moments, then tipped backwards and collapsed, unconscious.

“Quackity!” Fundy called, alarm clear in his voice. He made to sprint across the clearing, only to find his way blocked by George. “Get *out of my w—*”

“*Tommy?*”

All eyes snapped to Philza, who had frozen mid-combat with Punz and Sapnap—the former’s sword locked against his own, and the latter’s axe buried in Philza’s shield. The avian, though, wasn’t looking at either of them; instead, his stare was fixed on a point past Punz’s shoulder.

Tommy—or something that *looked* like Tommy—stood at the edge of the clearing. Trails of dull red blood trickled down his face. His eyes were pale, pure white, devoid of iris or pupil. The most telling hint of his inhuman nature, though, was the fact that he was floating several inches off the ground.

The ghost looked at the unconscious Quackity, looked at the various L’Manbergians currently being restrained by Dream’s allies, then looked at Dream. “You had one job,” was all he said.

Dream looked Tommy dead in the eye. Slowly, with all the serenity of a man well past the end of his rope, he lifted his unoccupied hand and raised a single middle finger in Tommy’s direction.



It took Technoblade two days to notice that something strange was going on with his window.

In his defense, he wasn't usually one to spend time staring pensively out into a wintry landscape. Also in his defense, he didn't go near that particular window often, given that it was placed in the back of his house and also angled to catch sunlight for only one hour of the day. Pretty useless, as far as windows went.

Which was why for two days, he didn't notice that its curtains had been mysteriously pulled back, nor that there was...*something* on the other side.

It was while he was rifling through one of his cabinets that Chat started whispering about the window. Technoblade initially ignored it, well-used to Chat's various "Made you look!" pranks, but when more voices began picking it up, he huffed and turned to glare at the window.

"Look, Chat," he deadpanned, gesturing to the glass. "Window. Trees. There's nothing... there..."

Now that he was staring at the window, he could tell that there was indeed something *very wrong* with it. At first, he thought the windowpane was dirty—which, alright, it wasn't like Technoblade ever cleaned his windows, but that was because the rain and snowmelt did that for him. Upon closer inspection, though, it wasn't dirty—it was just showing a scene of the forest outside *at night*.

Technoblade glanced at the other window in the kitchen, then the clock hanging above the sink. Both declared that the sun was still high in the sky.

"What?" he muttered, shuffling closer to the strange window. Yup, still nighttime—but everything was eerily still. Not even the slightest breeze ruffled the branches. The trees cast unnaturally dark shadows that stretched far beyond where they should've ended.

But it wasn't the shadows that caught Technoblade's eye. No, it was a patch of unusually white snow. Yes, Chat, he knew that snow was supposed to be white—but it seemed a little *too* bright. And now that he was staring at it, he couldn't help but feel it looked a bit like...an eye? Something vaguely eye-shaped?

Wait. No. That was an *actual* eye. And the thing he'd initially mistaken for a weird shadow was actually the face of a strangely elongated, humanoid picture peering up at him from just outside his window.

No, Chat, Technoblade *did not* scream. That screech was a war cry meant to strike fear into the hearts of his enemies, and the boot he put through the window right afterward was a calculated attack.

Or, well, he *would* have put his boot through the window...if there had actually *been* a window. Because *apparently*, someone had removed that window and replaced it with a very, *very* realistic wall painting.

Technoblade ended up with a bruised toe, a dented wall, and a very amused Chat.

---

“Who the fuck just leaves *dirt* all over the floor?”

George shrugged, though the slight wrinkle in his nose suggested he was just as appalled as Sapnap felt. The two of them stood staring down at the previously-clean Community House floor, which was now covered with a thin, uneven layer of dirt. Sapnap scuffed at it with the sole of his shoe—and slipped when he failed to encounter the expected dirt. He hit the floor with a loud “*Oof!*”, followed by a infuriated “*What the fuck?*”

“Huh,” said George, noting how Sapnap’s white shirt remained distinctly un-dirt-ied. “*Huh.*”

Sapnap twisted so he could poke at the floor. His face twisted into an expression of sheer *offense*. “...It’s fucking *painted?*”

The distinct *click* of a communicator camera caught his attention. He looked up to see George lowering the device with a smirk tugging at the corner of his lips. “You look stupid,” was all the man offered as an explanation. “Good blackmail material.”

Sapnap screeched and lunged for him. George ducked away and sprinted for the hills, cackling madly all the way.

---

Sam pressed his card against the reader, waited for the loud *beep*, and flipped the lever. His work on Pandora’s Vault was coming along pretty nicely. On his to-do list for today was testing the new keycard system; it also conveniently allowed him to make sure that all the doors would open and close properly.

The one in front of him slid open with a smooth *shhhhk*. Sam hummed appreciatively, checked it off twice on his clipboard, and stepped into the next room. He was *supposed* to turn around and make sure the door had closed automatically behind him, but as he looked up from his checklist, he found himself only capable of gaping at the room.

Where there had previously been blank walls and a single door, there were now four doors arrayed on every wall. Sam blinked rapidly and pinched himself to make sure he wasn’t dreaming. Unfortunately, what he was seeing appeared to be very real.

“What the?” Sam muttered, then made a beeline for where he knew the next door should’ve been. When he reached out to grasp the lever, the only thing that met his fingers was the cool, smooth surface of polished blackstone.

“What,” Sam repeated, drawing back to examine the “door” more carefully. What he had perceived to be the door was, in fact, an excruciatingly detailed, realistic *painting* of the door

and its accompanying lever. A quick examination of the “doors” to the left and right of what *should* have been the door revealed that they, too, were painted.

Someone had come into this room and painted twenty *exact* replicas of the door. Not only that, they had *moved* the *actual* door.

Now, Sam could’ve just broken down the wall to get to the next room. But even with all the security concerns this incident brought up, he had to admire the prankster for their creativity. It wouldn’t be very good sportsmanship if he just ruined their hard work. And besides, it wasn’t like Dream had set a deadline for when the prison had to be completed. He could afford to waste a few minutes.

It took Sam seven minutes to find the *actual* door. Mostly because the prankster had replaced it with a trapdoor in the corner, dug out a corridor with a ladder that would lead to the next hallway, and painted the wood to resemble blackstone.

Sam wasted an extra minute just staring at the trapdoor in disbelief. Then he scribbled a note about upping security measures on his clipboard, shook his head, and moved on to the next room.

---

Schlatt stumbled into the Community House—and nearly tripped over several diamonds.

“Woah woah woah—” he yelled, scrambling back to the doorway and staring at the shiny gems scattered across the floor. “What the—?”

He squatted down and attempted to pick up the one closest to him. His hand closed around empty air.

Schlatt blinked hard, stared, then poked at the diamond next to it. It, too, was very flat. Because it wasn’t a diamond at all. Some *motherfucker* had painted a fuckton of extremely realistic diamonds scattered on the floor of the Community House.

“Huh,” Schlatt muttered. Cautiously, he pushed himself to his feet and—after glancing around one more time—made for his original destination: the door at the other end of the Community House. He was only about perhaps three feet away when he stepped on something hard, which shot out from under his foot and sent him sprawling to the ground.

“What the *fuck*,” he yelled, jackknifing upright and glaring suspiciously at the diamond. It bounced off the far wall with a cheerful *clink* and rolled back to a stop near his foot.

Slowly, Schlatt reached out and picked it up. It felt...lighter than it should? He held it up to the sunlight, and...yeah, he really should’ve expected that. It was a perfectly normal rock, sanded down and painted in iridescent shades to resemble a diamond.

Now Schlatt had seen evil. Had been *called* evil, at certain points of his life. But he had never quite seen evil like this. It took a certain kind of creativity and a certain level of sadism to come up with this level of petty, targetless chaos.

“Damn,” he muttered with begrudging admiration, then tossed the rock back onto the floor for some other poor sod to trip on. If he had to suffer, then everyone else would too.

---

Quackity stared at the Prime Path, trying to decide if he wanted to investigate.

On one hand, he *really* should be getting home. On the other hand, he was pretty sure that the giant-fuck-off-glowing-green chasm currently running across that particular section of the Path was not supposed to be there. The lanterns that usually illuminated the area were extinguished, leaving the sickly glow emanating from the depths of the crack as the only source of light.

“What the fuck, what the fuck, what the fuck,” Quackity muttered, edging closer to get a better look. The jagged crack seemed to *lengthen* as he got closer, stretching unnaturally in ways that did not comply with the normal rules of perspective. No matter how much he squinted and tilted his head this way and that, he couldn’t make sense of it.

Now, a saner man would have called it a day and left it well enough alone. But a saner man would also have never even come to the Dream SMP in the first place. Which was why Quackity decided it would be a *wonderful* idea to step *onto* the Prime Path in the hopes of getting an *even closer* look—only for his foot to land on empty air.

For one heartstopping moment, Quackity thought that the crack might extend further than he’d realized. He threw out his arms and tried to wrench himself backwards, hoping against hope that he might manage to cling to the edge—

His foot met a solid surface, sank down another inch, and then *glitter* promptly exploded into the air around him.

Quackity crouched there for a solid twenty seconds, attempting to make sense of what had just occurred. Someone had seen fit to place what had looked like the entrance to some eldritch dimension in the middle of a commonly-used walkway. And it only *looked like* a chasm, because now that Quackity was up close and personal with the thing, it was apparent that it was just a very realistic illusion that involved glow-in-the-dark paint. A chunk of the Prime Path’s top layer had been cleared to further the illusion, and the bottom of the shallow pit had been lined with pressure plates that sprayed *glitter* of all things all over whatever unfortunate soul had been foolish enough to wander into the trap.

Quackity looked down at himself. The thick coat of glitter now covering his clothes sparkled green in the dim light. It was going to get *everywhere*.

“Fuck you,” he told the path.

It, predictably, did not reply. Without a suitable target to wreak vengeance upon, Quackity had no choice but to extricate himself from the trap and trudge off, leaving a trail of glitter in his wake.

---

“Dream. My friend. My fellow looper. My least favorite person on the server. I support your artistic journey, but *this crosses the fuckin’ line.*”

“I was just helping you redecorate your ugly house, Tommy. You should be thankful—”

“You repainted my *entire room!* I woke up and thought I was on my fuckin’ CEILING for a second! *And* you glued all my furniture to the *actual ceiling*—”

“You’re always bragging about how tall you are, you should be able to reach it.”

*“I WILL MURDER YOU.”*

“Hey, that’s not very pogchamp of y—OW NOT THE FACE, *NOT THE FACE!*”

---

Philza paused at the threshold of the Community House and took a moment to question reality.

Multicolored plastic blocks littered the floor. He recognized them as the “Lego” toys that he’d seen on servers before this one—a toy of some kind that helped children learn the basics of blocks and inventory use. They were *also* notoriously painful to step on.

Now Philza had his boots on, which eliminated that issue. Still, he was rather struck by the oddity of the situation. He knelt down to pick up one of the legos—and discovered that what he had *mistaken* for legos was in fact many life-sized *paintings* of legos scattered about the floor. Even worse, he could see the occasional *real* lego mixed in with the painted ones. The cherry on top of the whole mess was the area that had appeared to be lego-free: a somewhat janky, very thin four-way path between the doors that would’ve forced any who braved it to walk heel-to-toe. Except on closer inspection, Philza realized that there were indeed legos on the path—just legos that had been painted to blend very well into the floor.

Philza slowly rose to his feet and backed out of the Community House. He didn’t know what was happening here, and he didn’t *want* to. In fact, if this was the kind of shit people on the Mainland were getting up to, it was probably better if he just...avoided the entire area for the time being.

Yeah, no. Back to the tundra it was. He didn't need his Chat following him here and getting any ideas.

233.

*"I have,"* said Tommy, *"just realized something of monumental importance."*

Dream raised an eyebrow at him from the other side of the cell.

*"I don't have a mouth."*

"...You're just realizing that?"

*"I dont have a mouth, Dream, how the fuck am I supposed to drink milk like this?"*

Dream shrugged. "You could stay as a blob for the rest of this loop—"

*"Fuck no."* Tommy squinted at him. *"...this happened to you a few loops ago, didn't it?"*

"Yes. And somehow, *despite* creating the blobbifying potion and *knowing what it does*, you still drank it." Dream deadpanned. He raised his hands and began slow clapping.

"Congratulations, you win Biggest Idiot of the Year."

Tommy glowered at him. *"You drank a water resistance last time! How was I supposed to know messing up a fire resistance could also affect ghosts like this?!"*

"This is what we get for trying a new breakout method," Dream muttered. He dragged a hand down his face, then gestured towards the entrance of the cell. "Should I just...?"

*"Fuck no. We can still make this work—"*

"You can't break me out like this."

*"I can try,"* Tommy snipped. He paused for a moment, then straightened. *"Wait wait wait, you fixed it when it happened to you! I saw you! You un-blobbed yourself!"*

"Hm," Dream grunted.

Tommy nudged him in the leg. *"C'mon, big D, we can still fix this. Tell me how you did it and I'll get you out—"*

"Did you bring a milk bucket or a milk capsule?"

Tommy blinked at the non sequitur. *"Uh, capsule?"*

Dream shook his head. "You need a bucket. Blobs use osmosis."

*"They fucking what."*

"Osmosis," Dream repeated. He still looked exhausted, but the spark of humor in his eyes was unmistakable. "It's why they don't have mouths. They just drink through their skin."

Tommy stared at Dream. Stared at the floor.

*"Oh Prime," he whispered. "Am I—am I drinking the obsidian juice?"*

Dream shrugged. "I mean, it isn't a passive action. You should be able to tell if you're doing it."

Tommy made a face. *"Right, dickhead, I'll just know how to slurp dirt through my skin like a—earthworm."*

"Earthworms drink using their skin?"

*"Of fucking course they do, you—ARGH! That's not important right now!"* Tommy hopped up on Dream's leg and proceeded to jump up and down on his knee in a very ineffective imitation of stomping. *"Get me a bucket of milk!"*

"Ah, yes," Dream drawled, slowly turning his head to scan the cell. "Any second now, a milk bucket will magically appear in this impenetrable prison that is specifically built to keep people weak with Elder Guardian magic."

Tommy glowered. It was hard to convey with body language alone, but he managed.

Dream reached down and lightly patted him on the head with a patronizing finger. "You know," he mused, "it's hard to forget that you're an ancient gremlin of chaos and destruction when you look so...harmless."

*"I'll show you chaos and destruction if you don't get me some milk right. Fucking. Now."*

"Don't worry, I'm sure Sam will get you some." Dream smirked. "...Eventually."

Tommy attempted to stomp on Dream's hand to convey his displeasure. Seeing as he currently weighed almost nothing, it was very ineffective.

## **234.** *(inspired by Cookiewithminth)*

"No!" Puffy cried, frantically trying to push Sam and Eret away as the two of them held her back. "No, *Foolish*—"

"Puffy, you could've stopped this if you stayed with the Eggpire." Antfrost sneered. "This is all your fault."

"No it's not." Foolish's throat bobbed against the sword pressed to it as he swallowed. With what little cheer he had left, he smiled. It was wobbly and offset by the fear in his eyes, but it was the effort that counted. "It's okay, Puffy. Don't listen to them, it's not—"

“Hey,” Hannah’s voice interrupted the proceedings, drawing all eyes to her. She was staring at a point past Puffy’s shoulder with her brows furrowed. “What is that?”

All eyes turned to what had caught Hannah’s attention. A hand was sticking through the curtain of lava, apparently unharmed. It retracted a moment later, only to be replaced by a head, followed by a torso, and then there was another person caught in the trap.

“...T-Tommy?” Fundy stammered, taking a cautious step closer to the teenager. The caution was warranted; Tommy had a potion bottle clutched in one hand, and the cloud of potion particles surrounding him was so thick that it was impossible to tell what color the particles were. His eyes were bright with the telltale signs of potion overdose.

“Woaah,” he muttered, swaying on his feet. He squinted blearily at the scene around him, then hiccuped and took another swig from his bottle. “Whas goin’ on here? Zis a party?”

“Tommy!” Bad cried, spreading his arms wide and smiling brightly when Tommy turned his unfocused gaze on him. “Yes, it *is* a party!”

Tommy nodded. “Pog.” He frowned. “Wait, why wasn’t I invited?”

“Tommy, you can’t be here,” Sam said. He released Puffy to approach Tommy and perhaps convince him to leave the trap, only for Ponk to step into his path. “Ponk. Get out of my way.”

“Nuh-uh,” said Ponk, waving his sword in Sam’s face. “Don’t try to get in the way of another sacrifice, Sammy.”

“Sag-rih-fise?” Tommy asked. “Tha’ sounds kinda bad.”

“No, no, it’s just a game!” Bad said, still smiling that terrible smile. “A fun game! Why don’t you come over here and play, Tommy? You’ll have a *lot* of fun!”

“Okay,” Tommy agreed. He shuffled towards the Eggpire; Ponk flanked him, speaking over Sam’s calls to Tommy and smacking away Eret’s desperate attempt to grab the teenager’s arm. Puffy made a low, wounded noise of horror as Tommy made a beeline for Antfrost—and Foolish, who was still kneeling at the cat hybrid’s feet. Antfrost smirked and lifted his sword from Foolish’s throat, ready to bring it down across Tommy’s instead. Foolish shifted, clearly preparing to intervene—

It happened quickly. One second, Antfrost’s blade was arcing through the air and Foolish was launching himself upwards, trying to knock Antfrost off balance. In the next, Foolish was sprawled several feet away and Tommy had Antfrost pinned to the floor. The teenager took the moment of the stunned silence to slam a fist into the man’s chin and knock him clean out. He scrambled away a moment later, slipping out of range of Ponk’s sword before it could take his head off.

The rest of the Eggpire recovered fairly quickly, lunging at him with their own weapons. Puffy shook herself out of her stupor long enough to hurry forward and gather a stunned Foolish into her arms and half-carry, half-drag him back to the relative safety of the crowd.



The god was shaking from the aftermath of the adrenaline rush only a near-death experience could produce. Golden ichor dripped from the shallow cut across his neck and soaked into his collar; Eret silently tore some fabric from the hem of his dress and pressed it over the wound, gaze occasionally darting back to the scene in front of them.

Tommy was somehow, impossibly, holding his own against Bad, Hannah, and Ponk while high on magic. Or maybe he *wasn't* high on magic; the switch from rambling drunkard to vicious warrior had certainly been quick enough to suggest that he'd been faking it. Unfortunately, holding his own didn't mean he was winning; the three remaining conscious members of the Eggpire had regrouped and were now driving him backward, towards the Egg. The parasite's shell gleamed red as it retracted the obsidian that had protected it from Sam's initial TNT trap. To the onlookers' horror, a slit opened up in its shell and cracked apart, revealing a gaping maw lined with razor-sharp thorns. Barbed vines rose up from the Egg's base, lashing out and clamping down around Tommy's sword arm. The teenager let out a shout, then cursed when one of the vines *twisted*, forcing him to drop his weapon.

In one neat movement, Bad slashed Tommy's stomach open and shoved him straight into the tear. Everyone in the room had a chance to see Tommy's eyes widen right before the maw clamped shut around him.

"*NO!*" Puffy shrieked, but it was already too late. The Egg's surface had smoothed over, leaving no trace of Tommy.

"At least he'll be of *some* use," Bad huffed. He straightened and flicked his sword in a bid to hide how he was still catching his breath. "His blood will nourish the Egg—"

"He was a *kid*," Sam growled, trembling with white-hot fury.

"He was a threat to the Egg," Bad corrected. "Just like the rest of you are. Now—"

*BOOM!*

Everyone within a five-foot radius of the Egg was thrown forward by the force of the explosion. The rest stumbled back, lifting their arms to protect themselves from the rush of hot air. When the smoke had somewhat cleared, they looked up to see a terrifying sight.

The Egg looked like it had been torn open from the inside out. Its chunks writhed and twined together and refused like some sort of thick, flesh-like clay. Mouths full of sharp thorns split across its shell and issued forth a horrible screech of rage and agony, forcing several people to their knees. Tongues of white-hot fire blazed around it, their tips shimmering blue as they crawled up the surface of the Egg. They left charred eggshell wherever they touched, though the Egg seemed to be repairing itself just as quickly as it was damaged.

A delighted cackle was all the warning the Eggpire received before Tommy burst from the flames with his sword swinging. The large gash in his shirt—courtesy of Bad's attempt to cut him open—revealed unrecognizable Enchantments painted across his unmarred skin. More symbols burned on his arms and across his cheeks; the flames and smoke seemed to roll over him, almost as though they were repelled by some invisible force. He drove Bad back, keeping up a flurry of attacks so quick that the man could do little more than defend himself.

His allies, though, soon came to his aid—but even then, Tommy was fighting harder, fighting *better*. It was as though he'd been holding back—which Sam now realized had been so he could explode the Egg from the inside out.

Ponk's sword was suddenly wrenched from his hand by an unseen force. He spun around with a cry of alarm, but was too slow to dodge the follow-up punch that knocked him out. Antfrost, who had only just begun to stir, was unceremoniously treated to an unknown splash potion that appeared out of thin air and broke open beside him. He instantly froze, paralyzed where he lay.

“THERE'S ANOTHER ONE!” Bad screeched, frantically parrying Tommy's attempts to decapitate him. “THEY'RE INVISI—*ACK!*”

Hannah growled and threw up an arm. A barrage of crimson vines struck the spot where the invisible interloper had been moments before, then exploded in all directions. Several buried themselves in the ground. A couple slashed at Tommy, who was forced to jump away from Bad to avoid them. The remaining ones lunged for the defenseless Players huddled in the corner of the room—and were slashed to ribbons before they could touch the ground.

“There!” Hannah snapped, clenching her outstretched hand into a fist. New vines—some thorny, some the signature red of the Egg's infected flora—converged on the space where the unknown player had been moments before. A few met their mark—and were also shredded in a show of expert swordsmanship. Bad, who had been frantically looking back and forth in a futile attempt to spot Tommy amidst the clearing smoke, gave up with a growl and sprang for the invisible fighter.

Or, well, the no-longer-invisible fighter. The potion was wearing off, and now they could see the faint, shimmering outline of a person bringing their blade up to meet Bad's. As they continued to exchange blows, the color leached back into their figure, growing more opaque until—

Sam felt Puffy go rigid beside him. He didn't blame her, because somehow, impossibly, that was *Dream*. Dream, the manipulator, the villain, the one who had hurt Tommy more than Tommy could ever possibly describe—was now fighting alongside him to protect the very people who had locked him in a prison a month ago.

But this fight—this fight was *strange*. Sam knew how Dream fought—had sparred with him regularly, even, before everything went to hell—and this wasn't how Dream fought. No, Dream's usual form was all speed and precision. It was why he was able to hold his own so well against Technoblade's efficiently brutal berserker style; he darted around strikes like lightning, here one moment and there in the other, so that he wore out his opponent without ever taking a hit.

This, though—this wasn't quick or sharp or erratic. Instead, Dream's movements flowed like water, bending around attacks and rising up to mirror his enemy's. When Bad swung his axe, Dream turned it aside with a strike of his palm to the flat of the blade—then proceeded to effortlessly twist the weapon from Bad's hands and swipe it into an upstroke similar to what Bad had attempted to do to him mere seconds ago. He was turning Bad and Hannah's moves against them.

“Holy shit,” someone muttered from behind them. Sam couldn’t help but wonder where this level of proficiency had been in that horrible final confrontation in the depths of Dream’s base. He could clearly hold his own against multiple opponents—and this was *after* a month spent rotting in a cell. If Dream had fought like *this* to escape, they might not have been able to put him in prison at all.

The battle came to a lull as the three fighters disengaged to circle each other. Dream was breathing hard and his scratched armor had taken a hit or two, but he seemed otherwise fine. Bad was much worse for wear, having lost his blazer sometime during the commotion. His shirt was stained with demon’s blood.

Hannah, though, was definitely flagging. She had overtaxed her phytokinesis, if the blood trickling from her nose and her trembling hands were any indication. In one last act of desperation, she lunged and slashed clumsily at Dream, but the man stepped back and out of range. Her next step had her overbalancing—and one kick to the head later, she, too, was slumped unconscious on the ground.

Bad took a moment to calculate, spun on his heel, and sprinted for the Egg. Dream gave chase—and Sam was prevented from seeing what happened next when Tommy appeared in front of them with the sparkling sound of shattering ender pearls. Bits of his hair and shirt were aflame, but he hardly seemed to notice. “Back up, back up!” he hissed, jostling Sam—and by extension, the rest of the crowd—back with one arm. With his other hand, he began frantically laying down stone.

Sam was too stunned to ask any questions; he just watched as the haphazard wall thickened and grew into a half-dome, obscuring the rest of the room and forming a protective shield around the crowd. When it was complete, Tommy turned on his heel and disappeared with another ender pearl, only to return with Hannah slung over his shoulder and Antfrost dragging behind him by the back of his shirt. He unceremoniously dropped them next to the horrified banqueters, pearled away, then returned with a similarly conked-out Ponk and... Bad.

“They actually got him,” Sam heard Puffy whisper. He turned to look at her, only to see her staring at the demon with something between awe and grief in her eyes. “They—Dream actually got him.”

Tommy tossed the remaining members of the Eggpire next to their incapacitated allies, then turned and looked towards the wall. “WE’RE CLEAR!” he hollered.

For a moment, there was nothing. And then the world *burned*.

With a concussive *BOOM*, a white-hot inferno bloomed on the other side of the wall, climbing high enough to clear the lip of the half-dome. Even with the stone between them and the flames, the wave of heat that rolled over them had sweat dripping down Sam’s brow. The shockwave followed only moments later, a powerful tremor that shook the earth and sent loose stones slamming into the far wall. Sam stumbled as the red vines beneath his feet twitched, shriveled, and disintegrated into ashy powder; the subsequent snow of blackened ash revealed that the vines previously sprouting from the cave ceiling had suffered a similar fate.

A second later, all three knocked-out members of the Eggpire jolted awake with a scream. Antfrost, who was still under the effects of that strange paralysis potion, just twitched violently. The red drained from his half-open eyes, leaving bloodshot blue behind.

“*Shit*,” Hannah groaned, pressing a hand to her head as she struggled to her knees. Ponk, meanwhile, had crawled to the edge of the half-dome, pulled the bottom of his mask up to his nose, and started dry-heaving. Bad lay sprawled where he’d awoken, staring blankly at the ceiling. None of them reacted when the crowd collectively flinched away.

“Pog,” Sam heard Tommy mutter beside him. “Rescue plan, phase one complete.” Before Sam could ask what *that* was about, though, the teen popped up from his crouch and tore straight through the center of their protective half-dome with a pickaxe. “C’mon, c’mon!” he shouted, waving the group forward. “It’s safe now, the Egg’s dead!”

Sam glanced back at the others in the hopes that one of them would know *what* was happening. The only one who met his gaze was Puffy, and she could only offer him a bewildered shrug. Without any better options, Sam had no choice but to follow Tommy.

The once-splendid banquet hall now resembled a battlefield. Shards of what had once been the table were now strewn across the floor. Scorch marks stretched across the walls in bold, haphazard streaks. The corner where the Egg had once resided was now completely reduced to scorched rubble and thick clouds of smoke, along with the charred remains of what resembled an extremely overcooked egg.

Dream had some sort of smoking, tubular contraption hoisted over his shoulder. He lowered it as the banquet attendees stumbled out from behind the wall. The smoke from the weapon cleared just enough to reveal the almost manic grin spread across his sooty face.

“It worked?” Tommy asked, patting out the flames in his hair as he stumbled towards the madman. Sam broke from his stupor a little too late, and his attempt to grab Tommy before he could approach Dream missed by a mile.

“Perfectly,” Dream confirmed. He lifted a hand. “High five?” Tommy scoffed and offered a fist instead, which Dream rolled his eyes at but obligingly bumped.

“Tommy, Dream, what...” Foolish began, sounding as lost as Sam felt. “What just happened?”

“We saved your asses!” Tommy grinned widely and slung an arm around Dream’s shoulder, disregarding the man’s yelp and frantic attempts to pat out the tiny fires that were now spreading from Tommy’s shirt to Dream’s jumpsuit. “You’re welcome!”

“But—you—” Sam looked between the two of them, taking in the easy (impossible) camaraderie. “You were—working together?”

“Yup!”

“But—Dream is...evil.”

“I’m just misunderstood!” Dream protested at the same moment that Tommy said, “He got better!”

They looked at each other for a moment.

“You were *not* misunderstood,” Tommy informed Dream. “Take that back before I take your third vertebrae, you fucker—”

“You can’t just threaten to disassemble someone’s spine, Tommy—*OW!* I take it back, I take it back, *stop pinching me!*”

“SO YEAH,” Tommy said over Dream’s yelp. “We’re working together because Dream’s not so evil anymore! Still a massive bitch, but he lost the god complex somewhere around the start of the time loops—yeah, those are involved—so he’s served his jail time, gotten a redemption arc, all that.” Tommy did jazz hands. “Pretty pog if you ask me—”

“Nobody asked.”

“—I *will* remove your fourth vertebrae too, bitch—”

“Time loops?” Puffy interjected weakly.

Tommy nodded and grinned wider, as though imploring them to ignore the sheer amount of bullshittery that was currently occurring. “Yup. It’s why we’re *extra* pog now.”

“And why we have a rocket launcher,” Dream added.

“And why we have a rocket launcher!” Tommy agreed, then pointed at Sam. “Sam invented it, we upgraded it—and we put some fuckin’ *epic* upgrades, Sam, if you want to look at it later.”

Sam opened his mouth...and shut it again. He scrambled for words to express the sheer amount of confusion he was feeling, discovered that the English lexicon lacked the capacity to do so, and ended up making an inarticulate noise that resembled the world’s most garbled keyboard smash.

“It’ll make more sense later,” Tommy told him sympathetically. “Just, uh, refrain from trying to jail Dream for now? I kinda need him for something.”

Puffy, once again, proved her bravery as the de facto spokesman for their little gathering. “... Something?”

“We’re going to commit crimes against the laws of reality,” said Tommy.

“He needs help baking some brownies,” Dream said at the same time.

There was an awkward pause.

“...And I need some help baking some brownies,” said Tommy. “They’ll just be very reality-breaking brownies.”

“I thought we were doing the reality-breaking after the brownies?”

“We can multitask! I am so good at multitasking. The greatest at it, in fact—”

An ominous rumble cut through Tommy’s rapidly-escalating monologue. The teenager squinted up at the ceiling, then turned to his apparently-no-longer-worst-enemy.

“Dream, did the rocket launcher happen to...cause structural damage?”

“I’m pretty sure it did? It was a pretty big explosion, and we’re underground.” Dream’s eyes widened. “...Wait, is Quackity’s group still hiding in the walls?”

“Ah shit,” said Tommy. He pulled away from Dream and sprinted away into the smoke, only to hurtle back out of it with a yelp of “*WAIT FUCK I FORGOT!*” snatch the rocket launcher, shove two potion bottles into Dream’s now empty hands, and charge off again with the rocket launcher in tow.

The silence left in his wake was broken by yet another rumble and several showers of dust from the cavern ceiling. Dream looked down at the potions, looked up at his befuddled audience, and sighed heavily.

“Here’s what’s going to happen,” he said. “I am going to splash all of us with this Fire Resistance. And then I’m going to drink this potion, which will turn me into a dragon. *You* all are going to *calmly* huddle together so I can cover you from any falling rocks, and we are all going to *calmly* walk through the lava trap together and get out through the exit. Capiche?”

The only response he received was some more vaguely traumatized staring.

“Great! Let’s go!”

Apparently, *announcing* that you were going to turn into a dragon did not, in fact, keep people from screaming their heads off when you went through with it. Needless to say, phase two of the rescue plan was anything *but* calm.

**235.** *seeing red, pt. 5* ( [see previous parts of this loop here](#) )

### ***TW: Body Horror***

Dream chanted, his voice rising and falling in tandem with the beat of his pounding heart. This was it. The final vow towards priesthood. The final promise to Lady Prime before he could gain Her protection—and the first step in his plan to save Tommy.

The last syllable of the vow slipped between his teeth and rang hard against the shadowy walls of the Church. It sounded like a gong, a bell, a death knell. Dream remained still. His hands, clasped in front of him, ached with how tightly he gripped them. A bead of sweat trickled down from his hairline and past his closed eyes.

The Church windows rattled violently. A cold breeze swept between the pews. The rushing of the Church's waterfall faded away, as did the sound of the crickets chirping outside. The cold tile beneath Dream's knees no longer seemed cold. The dull ache in his throat dissolved.

His thoughts turned, unbidden, to his past. Memories flashed before him—memories of the loops. Memories of Pandora's Vault. Memories of Tommy, laughing and weeping and screaming and smiling. He watched it all play out as though through a pane of glass, as though he was seeing his own life through someone else's eyes. He was a passive observer, reading a story still being written. A story that was one among many, a story that *should* have been so insignificant, yet a story that had captured the attention of something *Other*.

Beneath that all-seeing gaze, he felt small. He felt warm. He felt—

**I see that I granted this favor to your companion, once. For his amusement, no less.**

**His devotion must be great. As is yours, even if it is not to me.**

**Very well. I grant this protection. Rise as my priest, and use this power as you see fit.**

**I see your sorrow, tired traveler. I cannot interfere. I am a god of this world alone, and Time is beyond my domain.**

**Save your family. And when he is returned to you, remove that parasite from this world.**

—safe.

Dream took a deep breath and opened his eyes. His skin tingled with static. His body felt—*fizzy*, like someone had bottled pure sunlight, violently shaken it, and poured it out over his head.

He pried his clasped, trembling hands apart and held them up. In the moonlight, they looked just like they always had—scarred and callused from years of sparring, fingernails chipped due to negligence—but he somehow knew that they had *changed*.

Slowly, Dream pushed himself to his feet. His legs felt strange, as though they'd forgotten how to walk. He took a step—then another, laboriously making his way up the aisle of the church and out into the night at a shuffling pace.

There was a Crimson flower growing three feet from the edge of the Holy Lands. Dream crouched beside it, reached out, and tore it from the earth. Several *snaps* echoed through the night as its roots were separated from the larger system residing beneath the earth; the plant reacted accordingly, its roots reaching out in search of a new host. They tentatively probed at his wrist, only to recoil from his skin.

Dream's eyes narrowed. He tightened his grip on the flower, cleared his throat, and murmured the words of the blessing.

The flower spasmed in his hand, writhing like a snake. Its petals curled in on themselves, blackened, and disintegrated. Its stem and leaves followed a moment later, leaving only ashy residue behind.

A near-manic grin spread across Dream's face. He turned his hand this way and that, running his fingers across the unmarred skin where the roots had tried to infect him. "It worked," he whispered. "It fucking *worked*. Thank *Prime*."

A soft breeze swept through the thin fabric of his shirt, raising gooseflesh along his arms. He shivered, wiped the remains of the flower off his hand, and turned to the Path.

The first half of the plan was complete. Now all he had to do was make plans with the Syndicate—and then he would finally, *finally* get Tommy to safety.

---

"So that's why there was a note—?"

Ranboo's mouth snapped shut as four sets of eyes turned to him. He shrank in on himself, furiously avoiding their gazes.

"Note?" Technoblade asked, an implicit encouragement to continue speaking.

"Um. Tu—I mean, *I* found a note on my door the other day," Ranboo began haltingly. His fingers tapped out a nervous pattern on the Syndicate table. "It, um, told u—*me* to stay away from Tommy..."

"That was me," Dream admitted. "I didn't want the Crimson to trick anyone into becoming infected."

"O-oh," said Ranboo. He didn't look at Dream as he spoke—a sort of pattern that Dream had noticed ever since he stepped into the full Syndicate meeting.

When Dream addressed Ranboo directly, he'd look anywhere *but* Dream. On the other hand, when Dream *wasn't* looking at him, Ranboo would stare intently at him. Dream was uncomfortably aware of it—not because it was hostile, but because of how *terrified* Ranboo seemed. The kid twitched with every too-fast movement he made and flinched every time he spoke, and the other Syndicate members had started looking between the two of them with increasing concern (or on Niki's part, suspicion).

"So did you?" Niki asked. "Stay away from Tommy, I mean."

"Ah. Um. I...went looking for him," Ranboo admitted. "But I. Um. Couldn't find him."

"Probably for the best," Philza muttered. He looked to Dream. "Now that Ranboo's on the same page—what's the plan?"



Dream pressed his hands to the table and stared down at the parchment, trying not to notice the way Ranboo pressed himself back into his chair. “Tommy is—extremely infected. I don’t think holy water is going to work—which means that I’ll have to put a blessing on him directly.” He took a deep breath. “Problem with that is I need to be touching him for it to work, and he’ll be trying to get away. The other members of the Eggpire might also be trying to kill me at the same time, so—”

“You need us to run interference,” Technoblade deadpanned.

“Yes.”

“How long will it take?” That was Philza, who had leaned forward to prop both elbows on the table and was now studying Dream with startling intensity. When Dream hesitated a moment too long, he clarified, “The blessing. How long is it?”

“...About five minutes, but I’ll have to start over if I get interrupted.”

“Hmm.” Philza frowned. “How many of them are there again?”

“Bad and Antfrost at the very least. I’m...not sure about Punz, Ponk, or Hannah yet. But Bad and Ant will definitely be there—”

“Two against four shouldn’t be too—”

“—*but* the Egg might be able to move.”

“...Move?”

“The vines,” Dream clarified, realizing that none of them had seen the Egg at this stage of development yet. “The big red ones. They can, uh, attack people.”

Philza blinked slowly, then lifted a hand to rub at his temple. “...Well, fuck that.”

“Potions could help,” said Niki. “Weakness to slow them down.” She turned to Dream. “Do potions work on the Egg?”

Dream opened his mouth to answer, and abruptly realized that he had no idea. “I don’t know,” he admitted. The words felt strange in his mouth; it had been so long since he genuinely hadn’t known the answer to a question.

The slight narrowing of Niki’s eyes was the only indication of her dissatisfaction with Dream’s answer. “...Okay. Would giving Tommy Weakness interfere with your...blessing?”

She said the last word like it was a foreign concept. Dream didn’t blame her; conflating such a benevolent word to someone she’d perceived as an enemy must be strange. “No,” he said.

“Then we should put them all under Weakness,” said Niki. “The—Eggpire, I mean. If we could knock Tommy out too, it would make everything easier.”

“Good plan,” Technoblade agreed. “All in favor of a potion ambush?”

Everyone in the room, save for Ranboo, raised their hands. Ranboo, for his part, was staring down at something beneath the table.

“Ranboo?”

Ranboo startled violently. “Bwuh? Erm—sorry, what?”

“...How do you feel about ambushing the Eggpire with splash Weakness?”

“Oh. Um. That sounds like a...good idea?” Ranboo’s eyes darted back down to whatever he was hiding under the table. Dream subtly craned his head to get a look at what it was—and caught a glimpse of a communicator. Interesting.

“We’ll need to brew a lot of potions, then,” Technoblade muttered. “I have a couple somewhere in my chests, but probably not enough to knock out five people. Not all Splash, either. Hm.”

Philza sat up. “I can help with that,” he said. “Got a whole bunch of blaze powder on my last Nether run and—”

Ranboo abruptly shot up from his seat, drawing all eyes to him. “E-excuse me,” he stammered, then all but sprinted out of the room. Technoblade sent an inquisitive glance towards Philza and Niki, but they both shrugged. The planning session resumed without much fanfare, and after a few minutes, Ranboo hurried back into the room, looking distinctly more haggard. He returned to his seat, and thereafter began sending nervous glances towards the door every few minutes.

“—but we can’t just free the Eggpire, we need to destroy the Egg too,” Dream was saying just as the door slammed open. The Syndicate leapt to their feet and drew their weapons—all of them except for Ranboo, who slumped deeper into his seat with a sigh of resignation. Before Dream even turned around, he knew who he would see.

“I’m helping,” said Tubbo, decked out in full netherite and glaring death and fury at Technoblade. “He’s my best friend. You can’t stop me.”

Technoblade’s eyes narrowed. “How did you get here?”

“Ranboo’s my husband, dumbass. And Tommy’s my best friend. I’m helping.”

Technoblade turned to look at Ranboo, who cringed into his chair but did not deny Tubbo’s words. “Really, Ranboo? You married the *government*?”

“He’s ex-government?” Ranboo offered weakly. “And he’ll help?”

Dream cleared his throat. “Tubbo—”

“I’m *helping*,” Tubbo snarled, “even if that means I have to work with *bastards* like you. I don’t know what you want with Tommy. I don’t trust you. And I *definitely* don’t trust *you* to be the one planning this entire thing.”

“Okay,” said Dream, because he’d been trying to kill Tubbo by this point in loop zero and the mistrust was definitely warranted. “I wasn’t asking about that. I just wanted to know if you, uh, had any nukes.”

He received a narrow-eyed stare. “...How do you know about that?” Tubbo asked, which was as good a confirmation as any.

“Oh, good,” said Dream. “We need to destroy the Egg, but regular TNT won’t cut it—”

“How. Do you know about that.” This time, it wasn’t a question.

Well then. Time to see how well his lie held up in front of the entire Syndicate. Dream took a deep breath and looked Tubbo in the eye. “I can see the future.”

“Bullshit,” was Tubbo’s instant response.

“I can. I have dreams—”

“Yeah? Where’s your proof?”

Dream swallowed. “...Have you found Michael yet?”

He found himself backed into the Syndicate table a moment later, hands raised in the air and the blunt side of an axe wedged under his chin. “*How do you know about him,*” Tubbo snarled, ignoring the shouts of alarm or Ranboo’s stuttered protests.

“I told you,” Dream said, careful to keep his breaths even and his voice level. “I’ve become a prophet of Prime. Divine revelations are part of the package.”

“Never took you to be religious,” Tubbo said. “Where’d your god complex go?”

“Lady Prime corrected me.” Dream allowed a note of genuine guilt to seep into his voice. “For what it’s worth, I’m sorry for—”

He choked as the axehead pressed harder into his throat. “I don’t want your fucking *apologies*,” Tubbo hissed, quiet enough that Dream could barely hear him over the blood pounding in his ears. “What I *want* is for Tommy to be safe. And if at *any point* I think you’re going to try something, I’ll kill you.”

*Got it*, Dream mouthed, holding up a thumbs-up as extra confirmation. Tubbo stared at him for three long, dragging seconds—and then he pulled back.

Dream coughed, massaging his throat in an effort to ease the bruise he could already feel forming there. He took a fortifying breath, then another, and when he felt somewhat composed again, he straightened and turned back to the Syndicate.

Ranboo was half out of his chair, eyes wide and hand held awkwardly near his chest as though he’d drawn back from reaching out. Technoblade, meanwhile, had halfway rounded the table—though his sword was pointed at the floor. When he met Dream’s gaze, he snorted

and dropped the weapon back into his inventory. “I didn’t save you from Tommy just to watch you get murdered, Dream. Do better.”

Dream was surprised by the weak laugh that managed to get from him. As the Syndicate retook their seats, he stepped to the side so that Tubbo could join him on their side of the table. “As I was saying,” he began, “we need to destroy the Egg, but regular explosives won’t work. Good news is, Tubbo has, uh, missiles. Throwing one at the Egg would probably destroy it, permanently—”

Tubbo interrupted him. “What happens to the people it’s brainwashed, then?”

“How much do you know about...everything?”

“Ranboo’s already told me,” Tubbo said impatiently. “What *I* want to know is what killing the Egg will do to Tommy.”

“If the ritual works, nothing. It won’t affect him. If the exorcism doesn’t work—it *should* kill the Crimson inside him.”

In truth, Dream had no idea how destroying the Egg would affect Tommy. They’d never encountered a case like this—and the *uncertainty* of it was frightening. The safest thing to do was to exorcize it first—because what if destroying the Egg *didn’t* save Tommy? What if it could somehow turn Tommy into its next physical host? What if—

Dream was pulled from his spiraling thoughts by Tubbo’s voice. “Fine. How exactly do you plan on using my nukes?”

Dream took a moment to regather himself. “...I know the Egg’s coordinates. If you can input them ahead of time and set up a delayed launch—rig it to happen an hour and a half, maybe two, after you hit the button—it’ll give us some time to gather the Eggpire in one place, knock them out, and kill the Egg before they wake up. Otherwise, if they wake up before we’ve killed it—”

“—and try to fight us off,” Philza finished. He leveled a stern look at Dream. “You realize that that leaves us with a pretty narrow window of time to work with?”

Dream shook his head. “As long as we get out of blast radius *before* the nuke launches, we’ll be fine. We can keep dosing them with Weakness, and if we take them to Church Prime, it’ll weaken the Egg’s influence. Putting them in holy water might offset some of the shock when the Egg dies, too...” He shook his head. “Back to my plan—we’ll have to split the work. Ranboo—I know combat isn’t your strong suit, so focus on defending yourself and keeping track of how much time we have before launch.”

“Okay,” said Ranboo, somehow managing to sound both nervous and relieved at the same time.

“Tubbo...” Dream looked at Tubbo, who met his gaze with a narrow-eyed stare. “The Egg might try to take me out with its vines once it figures out what I’m doing, and I can’t do the

ritual and focus on dodging at the same time. I need you to protect me and Tommy—and if the Weaknesses don't work against Tommy, I need you to help me keep him still."

For several tense seconds, Tubbo didn't respond. Finally, he gave one sharp, jerky nod. Dream felt his shoulders relax as he turned back to the Syndicate.

"Technoblade, Philza, Niki—I think it's best if you focus on taking down the eggheads—and defending me and Tubbo, if it comes down to it. There's...there's a chance the Weakness won't work on Tommy. He's not...fully human at the moment, and if potions don't work on the Egg then there's a chance that it'll still be able to—to. To move him."

The expressions of the three Syndicate members shuttered as he spoke those last words, but one after another, they nodded in agreement. "Sounds like a plan to me," Technoblade said. "Anyone have any problems with what Dream just outlined?"

Nobody spoke.

"Alright." Technoblade sat forward, a gleam in his eye. "If nobody's got anythin' to add, it's my turn to monologue. Let's talk *logistics*."

---

Tommy didn't know what day it was.

To be fair, he didn't really know a lot of things these days. Drifting was far preferable to being aware of the world around him; the red haze clouding his senses dulled the horror of his situation into a vague sense of dread.

It...wasn't so bad, after a while. He could almost forget what was happening, could almost pretend that he was just slipping in and out of sleep. It got easier as the pain dulled to an uncomfortable itch and the red veins spidering across his arms faded into unblemished skin.

Time passed in blinks. Now and then, he'd drop unexpectedly into a moment—a flash of overcast skies and rain against his skin, or the sound of Antfrost's voice curled around a sneer—but when his body remained still and silent, he'd sink back into the nothingness. The cycle continued for what felt like years; he floated, absent and incorporeal, wrapped in a twisted sort of comfort.

But then, that comfort was torn from him. Something called for his attention—he could feel his body moving, running—it pulled at his sore muscles, and the pain dragged him closer to awareness and then—

Tommy slammed back into reality just in time to see Technoblade locking blades with Punz. He tried to lift his head, but his whole body felt heavy—and not in the way it usually did. The Crimson was trying to move, he could tell, but it seemed...slower.

The reason why became clear the moment his mouth opened. The taste of Weakness flooded his throat, overpowering even the metallic tang that had resided there since the Crimson took root. Given the amount of broken glass at his feet, it had been at least three—enough that should have rendered Tommy dangerously close to death. But even as the potion particles wafted from his skin, he could feel the Crimson recovering, *adapting*, pushing through the effect and forcing him to move. It wasn't a full recovery by any means—his speed had nearly been cut down to half—but for the amount of Weakness he was currently under, he shouldn't have been able to *stand*.

A shout had his head turning without his input—and that was *Dream*, sprinting towards him with a sword in hand. All around them, people were fighting—the Syndicate against the Eggpire, from what he could see. It was impossible to tell the time of day by the clouded sky overhead, but the landmarks in his limited field of vision placed them at a patch of unoccupied land somewhere above the Egg's chamber. Crimson vines spiderwebbed across the ground, twitching and at times shifting to trip up the Syndicate members.

Tommy's attention returned to Dream just in time to see him draw his sword back to swing. A wave of relief swept through him at the ease of the action—it seemed the injury their last encounter had left Dream with was fully healed. Even so, Tommy found himself unwillingly moving to meet Dream's attack. He lifted his sword to parry the blow—but Dream's hilt locked against his and *twisted*, wrenching the weapon from Tommy's hands. The blade went skittering into the grass; Dream kicked it away before the vines nearby could make a grab for it, crouched, and lunged straight for Tommy. The Crimson—clearly not expecting this move—faltered, leaving just enough time for Dream to wrap him in a bear hug and bring them both down to their knees.

Tommy writhed in his grip, trying to break free. Dream tightened an arm around his shoulders and pinned him to his chest. His other hand came up to press against the back of Tommy's head, effectively preventing him from pulling away or bashing his head against Dream's.

“Sorry, sorry,” Dream muttered into his ear, a drone of meaningless platitudes that did nothing to ease the terror fluttering in his chest. “I’m sorry I took so long—it’s almost over, I promise.”

And then he took a deep breath and began chanting.

Tommy recognized the words instantly. They were the words of a blessing of Prime, meant to purify holy objects. Tommy himself had once used it to turn a jug of punch into a sweeter equivalent of holy water. But—no, what Dream was reciting wasn't the purification ritual—it was a mishmash of two *separate* blessings: one for purification and one for protection. The entire thing itself had been further modified to purify a *living being*—burning out the corruption while leaving the vessel intact.

Tommy could *feel* the Crimson dying within him, shriveling beneath the power of the holy words—and it was *not* happy about that. He began struggling with frenetic panic, bucking against Dream's hold and clawing at whatever he could reach. Still, the words of the modified blessing flowed off Dream's tongue, smooth and with an ease that spoke of countless sleepless nights spent reciting it to the shadows.

Tommy's jaw unclenched without his permission. He coiled in on himself, then launched upward in an attempt to tear Dream's throat out with his teeth. Dream jerked back just in time to avoid any serious damage, but Tommy still managed to clip his skin and draw blood. The syllables of the chant jerked upward in a yelp of pain before Dream dragged them back into line, even as he wrenched Tommy to the side and wrestled him to the ground. Tommy's cheek ground uncomfortably against the dirt as the Crimson thrashed, trying to break free. His arms were pinned, but his legs were still free—and the Crimson took advantage of that, kicking back wildly and using the leverage to strain against Dream's grip.

Suddenly, there was another set of hands holding down his legs. Tommy's eyes rolled wildly, and he only just managed to catch a glimpse of a panicked-looking Tubbo. "Tommy—if you can hear us, it's okay! We're going to kill it, okay? We're going to kill the Egg and you'll be fine—just stop struggling—"

*I'm trying!* Tommy wanted to scream. *I'm here, Tubbo, I'm trying so hard—*

**"Let go!"** were the words that came out of his mouth instead. **"Get—off—you're hurting me!"**

Tears were gathering in Tubbo's eyes, but he didn't let go. The Crimson tried again.

**"Please, Tubbo—Dream's hurting me, it—it hurts—"**

Tommy had never hated the Egg more than he did at that moment. Dream's chant did not stutter, but his grip on Tommy's arms tightened. Tommy knew he couldn't stop chanting, not without being forced to restart the whole process, and if Tubbo turned on Dream—

"Not Tommy," Tubbo muttered, almost to himself.

Tommy's heart jumped even as his mouth pleaded, **"It is me, Tubbo, please, I'm not lying —"**

"Stop using his voice," Tubbo snarled. He pressed down harder when Tommy tried to kick him. "Stop *pretending* to be him."

Somewhere to their left, Niki's voice rose in a shout of warning. "The vines!"

"On it!" Philza shouted back, much louder and much closer. Boots flashed by in Tommy's peripheral vision. Chunks of the Egg's vines landed in the grass around him, and somewhere in the distance, Bad's distorted voice rose in a scream of rage. It was soon cut off with the sound of a shattering bottle.

"Last one down," Technoblade grunted. His footsteps reverberated through the dirt pressed against Tommy's ear as he approached. "Ranboo, what's our time?"

"Twenty minutes—!" Tommy heard Ranboo wheeze out. The last syllable jerked up in a panicked yelp. "*Woah—*"

"Got your back, mate. Go help Niki carry Antfrost, we need to start getting them out of—"

The rest of Philza's words were lost to Tommy when every muscle in his body spasmed. A scream forced its way out of his throat, equal parts pained and enraged.

***“YOU WILL REGRET THIS!”*** the Crimson howled. Vines lashed at them, only to be cut down by Technoblade and Philza. ***“I WILL NOT BE STOPPED BY THE MERE WORDS OF A FORGOTTEN GOD—AGH!”***

Dream was speeding up, his voice now laced with frenetic panic. He was getting close to the end—Tommy could feel it in the way every cell within him *burned*. It hurt—hurt worse than sinking into lava or bleeding out or drowning in the depths of the sea—but it was a cleansing pain, a *healing* pain, the pain of a bone resetting and a wound being cleaned. It was *working*. The Crimson's thrashing was growing weaker, and as its control over his body faded, he could feel strength returning to him. He balled his hands into fists to keep them from clawing at himself—and *he could control them*. His body was moving under his power, and though each new movement caused a fresh wave of pain, he couldn't help moving *more*, testing the limits of his newfound control—

And then, suddenly, his screams were cut short.

Tommy found himself unable to speak. His vocal cords did not respond to him. He blinked furiously, straining every muscle in his body—but his voice was no longer his own.

Slowly, his head turned, up and up and up until he was looking straight at Dream. The other looper stared back, eyes wide even as his mouth opened to deliver the last words of the chant.

Tommy felt his lips stretch into a nightmarish smile.

***“If...he is not...mine,”*** it rasped, ***“he...cannot...be...yours.”***

Something *squeezed* in Tommy's chest. He tried to inhale—tried to speak, to *do* something—but all he could feel was the sudden, *terrible* cold, a prickling numbness that bloomed behind his ribs and splintered outward through his body. Roaring filled his ears as trembling inkspots splattered across his vision, crowding out the light and drowning out what remained of his consciousness.

The last thing he saw was Dream's horrified face.

## Chapter End Notes

Question: what are some things that y'all really want to see happening after the loops end? [Anonymous answers box here in case you don't like commenting \(and because it's easier to sort through\)!](#)

### About ot!Wilbur:

I'm not going to write him into any more loops. He'll either be mentioned by another character or appear for a few lines in the epilogue just to cement the whole “happy



ending” and prevent a plot hole by virtue of disappearing an entire character without in-fic explanation.

**About future updates:**

My past update schedule was a lot more frequent due to quarantine + high school workload. Unfortunately, I am now double majoring english + creative writing in uni while working 2 jobs, which cuts a LOT into fanfic time. I’ve also started pursuing my dream of writing original things, so fanfic has fallen a bit to the wayside.

Given my current trend with fic updates corresponding to school breaks, if I update again by the end of August, it’ll be at least 3 months between each update after that. Apologies in advance, and thank you all so much for your patience and support.

**Loop Notes**

**232.** Inspired by Harvey Stromberg’s shenanigans at the Museum of Modern Art. And, of course, those fake airpod stickers (my beloved).

**234.** *Fine*, they can be a little bit OP. As a treat.

**235.** The Egg’s getting the high score on Speaking Simulator. (The whole concept of the Egg manually speaking through Tommy was inspired by that game, which is, upon reflection, actually quite cursed.)

## End Notes

[Discord server! :D](#)

[Fanart master list](#), compiled by the wonderful Penh!

## Works inspired by this one

[One thousand wishes](#) by [Trytokillmeorsomething123](#)

[You can't jail me I'm a bad bitch](#) by [orphan\\_account](#)

[Minecraft, but we're stuck in a timeloop](#) by [Sunset\\_vib3s](#)

[Twisting the Loops](#) by [KittyLilyHeart](#)

[Aspiration For a Different Destination](#) by [l1ght](#)

[Time is a roller coaster that goes loop-de-loop](#) by [ZetaEta87](#)

[Time is linear for YOU. We're different though <3](#) by [Smallest](#)

[A change in universe](#) by [orphan\\_account](#)

[Introduction](#) by [SketchyFace](#)

[To The Parallel Universe That Put Us Together](#) by [Br0kenDreams](#)

[on scheming](#) by [Hexx\\_reader1942](#), [LeeLuvid](#), [RedLeaf712](#), [SA2\\_Astral](#), [ZGisTooShort](#)

[The Lights on the String](#) by [Insom](#)

[Temporal Difficulties](#) by [Tigercoolyeet](#)

[\[Restricted Work\]](#) by [Asquinate](#)

[The End of The Loops](#) by [A\\_Random\\_Shadow](#)

[Failed friendship.](#) by [Domain\\_Dog](#)

[Glitter in the air](#) by [The\\_Planner](#)

[Rewrite the Pages of Fate](#) by [orphan\\_account](#)

[Fanart for 'on temporizing'](#) by [LuckyMagicBelle](#) by [EclipseOfNight](#)

[It's all a Mistake, a Misunderstanding if you will](#) by [Chattin\\_Chills](#), [Viscis\\_My\\_Beloved](#) ([Chattin\\_Chills](#))

[being stuck in a time loop makes family reunions 1000x funnier](#) by [Winter\\_Fox\\_Mask](#)

[You never listen to me You never listen.](#) by [thatrandomwoman](#)

[Round and Round We Go](#) by [purpleavocado](#)

[Endless Mischief](#) by [M1kae](#)

[In A Daze](#) by [NyQuil\\_Bottle](#)

[Traveling Universes To Get Home and Wrecking Everything Canon In the Process](#) by [MagpieTheFicWriter](#)

[He's fucking weird, your Honour!](#) by [M1kae](#)

[Sorry, We Created a Temporal Anomaly](#) by [LegendaryBlueOranges](#)

[Let's Go To Heaven!](#) by Anonymous

[The anger of \(abused\) children](#) by [NyQuil\\_Bottle](#)

[Povtorit](#) by [M1kae](#)

[The Stasis of Time](#) by [Rats In A Trench Coat \(Rats\\_In\\_A\\_Trench\\_Coat\)](#)

[Hybrid Adventures!](#) by [AzaDoesStuff](#)

[Buzzing Stars of the Timeline\(s\)](#) by [Sunstorm\\_CME](#)

[Restricted Work] by [ZanderAlex\\_Questionable](#)

[Restricted Work] by [BurningHumanFlesh](#)

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!